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Tunnel Runners Honor 9/11 Hero

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Thousands of relatives and friends of the World Trade Center terror attack victims walked and ran yesterday in their memory. In the morning, some 4000 rain-soaked runners crossed the finish line on Vesty St., retracing Firefighter Stephen Siller's last steps, in the second annual Tunnel to Towers Run. An additional 150 New Yorkers walked from Battery Park to Ground Zero and back, wearing yellow and black ribbons in support of a Trade Center memorial that preserves the space where the towers once stood. For Siller's 36 year-old widow, Sally, and his five children, the 5-kilometer race that started in Brooklyn is a way to remember the firefighter's last act.

"The kids can see that their father is a hero," said the State Islander, who first met her husband in elementary school. Siller, of Squad One, in Park Slope, Brooklyn, was off-duty when he strapped on 60 pounds of gear and left his car in Red Hook.

He lugged the gear through the Battery Tunnel to West and Liberty Sts., where he was last seen. "This was something I had to be a part of," said race winner Dan McKay, a 24 year-old firefighter from Hollywood, Fla. The \$30 entrance fees went to the firefighter burn center and the Stephen Siller Let Us Do Good Children's Foundation, for kids who lost parents on Sept. 11. More than a physical test, the race was an emotional workout for the 4,000 runners.

"I was almost crying through the tunnel," said second-place finisher Ken Bonhan from Brooklyn's Ladder 106. "There were guys on the left holding flags, one for every guy we lost."

Marching for a memorial

Some in the throng marching behind bagpipes from Battery Park said they hope officials preserve the so-called footprint of the World Trade Center in the rebuilding. "You can have the rest, just give us that," said Florence Staub, 60, of the Bronx, whose 30-year-old son, Craig, died in the attacks.