

# Detroit Free Press

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## Fundraiser in Detroit gets boost from bicyclists



Runners, walkers and bicyclists slogged their way through an early morning downpour today in downtown Detroit, raising money and awareness in the Neighborhood Services Organization's 5th annual River Run and Walk.

Nearly 300 participants braved the elements to lend their support to the NSO, which has raised more than \$200,000 in the past from the event to support its mission of helping some of Detroit's most vulnerable citizens.

"It means a lot to our program to see that the weather didn't prevent our supporters from coming out today," said NSO President and CEO Sheilah Clay, 57, of Farmington Hills. "Not only do our participants get to spend a morning getting fit and enjoying some of the most beautiful scenery in our city, but they are also helping NSO provide services to thousands of our consumers who would

have nowhere else to turn to if these programs weren't available to them.”

New to the event this year was the addition of “Handlebars for the Homeless,” a 15-mile bike trek through the city that was organized by Detroit resident David Rudolph, 44, a former NSO board member.

Explaining the rationale for including a cycling event, Rudolph said, “I thought it was appropriate because just as the handlebars control the mechanics for a bicycle, the NSO is an important safety net that helps people get on their feet and back in control of their lives,” he said. “It gives them a reason to get pedaling again.”

All activities started and ended along the Detroit River Walk. The RiverRun and Walk route followed along Milliken State Park, past the Renaissance Center to Cobo Hall and back. The bike route circled part of Belle Isle, went through Indian Village and back. Detroit resident Mawuli Honu, 44, a native of Ghana, was one of the participants in the 5k run. “I decided to enter because I enjoy healthy exercise and it gives me a feeling of satisfaction to be assisting the homeless,” he said. A former paratrooper who spent 15 years in the Ghana Army, Honu especially identifies with the plight of homeless veterans in the U.S. “It’s heartbreaking to see them out on the streets,” he said. “These are people who served their country, and it’s difficult to see them in that situation. That’s why I run today — to get them off the streets.”