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Turning BLACK FRIDAY into TRACK FRIDAY

*About \$4000 raised for local charities by walking instead of shopping on Black Friday*

The Friday after Thanksgiving means Black Friday to many: a day spent running about in search of amazing retail sales. For a group of participants at the Highland Park High School, however, it meant something different this year. Instead of spending money at the mall, these folks chose instead to RAISE money while running and walking in support of charities meaningful to them. According to event organizer, Laura Gordon, about \$4000 was raised for the organization she was supporting, the Central Jersey Diaper Bank. Track Friday is a national initiative that began in New Jersey as an effort to support victims of Hurricane Sandy in 2012 and has been gaining momentum in cities across the country ever since.

The temperature may have been on the chilly side Friday, but it was nothing compared to the warmth generated by this group of over 60 participants, including kids and adults, and volunteers from the Highland Park Track, Cross Country, Soccer Teams and the Highland Park Buddy Ball teams. Also participating were runners representing the Raritan Valley Roadrunners Club, supporting this event for the 4<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, and supporters of the AttachAvi foundation.

The festivities began with a welcome gathering that included a beautiful rendition of our National Anthem and an energizing warm-up led by Fitness Instructor, Tina, of StarzTina Fitness. The highlight of the event, however, was undoubtedly the Kid's races, facilitated by Highland Park HS student athletes and ranging from short sprints to a 400-meter dash for those who dared! Competition was tough, but thanks to the Raritan Valley Road Runners, medals were awarded to all participants.

Throughout the event, as participants tallied the distances they walked, they were further fueled by treats provided by our generous food sponsors: House of Cupcakes, Bagel Express, Sweets to Nuts and Cabot Creamery. All participants received drawstring bags from our financial sponsors: Francesco Milltown, MAX East Brunswick, Greene Turtle, AiM Realty, Dr. Hochberg, Touch Salon of Milltown, Jersey Physical Therapy, ThrillCoaster Tours, Dr. Feldman (Dentist).

Donations in support of this year's charities, the Central Jersey Diaper Bank (a program of the AECDC) or the AttachAvi Foundation can be made through December 31 by visiting [trackfridayhp.org/donate](http://trackfridayhp.org/donate).