

Their love of running geared toward helping kids

Sportsmen of the Year: Bob Szymanski & Paul Koretzki

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Bob Szymanski's and Paul Koretzki's love of running isn't limited to the track at Shoreham-Wading River High School, where both men coach track and field and cross-country. The two coaches have also organized charity races to benefit high school students in the community for the past three decades.

The duo's efforts have earned them recognition as The Village Beacon Record's Sportsmen of the Year.

The races, held on Fourth of July weekend and Thanksgiving, raise money for the Community Fund to provide students with college scholarship assistance as well as to support local community programs.

More than 700 runners attended this year's Thanksgiving race.

Last year's race and this past July Fourth race raised nearly \$14,000 for student scholarships.

The races are always "extremely well attended," said Bryan Lilly, president of the Shoreham Civic Association. "I've done them a couple of years and I've gotten my daughter and my son to start with them. You see all your neighbors and you see the principal of the school there. It's just kind of fun."

Members of both the boys and girls track teams, which Szymanski and Koretzki coach, respectively, return home after graduating to take part in the annual races, Lilly said.

Although the charity races are the best-attended local events of the year, Joan Shamoun, administrative assistant for community programs, said Koretzki does a lot of work with other organizations, including a children's summer camp called Round-out, which runs in July.

The camp, which is open to children from kindergarten through sixth grade, focuses on

arts and crafts, as well as sports, Shamoun said, adding that nothing comes between Koretzki and the kids during the duration of that program.

"It's all for the kids, his attitude is," Shamoun said. "He's always thinking of the kids and getting them involved." Koretzki's dedication makes him a favorite among the campers, she said.

SWR assistant superintendent for human resources, William Bushman said Koretzki also runs the district's community service program, which includes a Teen Rec for middle-school students, as well as adult programs. He also organizes the community band involving teachers, students and parents. The band performs twice a year at the high school.

Of Szymanski, Lilly said, "He's always looking to get kids involved, whether it's in the high school or his community. He's always accessible to the kids in the programs, the kids that run on his teams, and that shows he's a very good community member."

The two men have had just as

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— LYNN SCHWARTZ,
SWR ATHLETIC DIRECTOR



Bob Szymanski, left, and Paul Koretzki


Courtesy photos

much success on the field as they have in the community. Lilly said Szymanski just won his eighth county championship in the past nine years, while Koretzki has sent several girls over the years to state championship competitions.

SWR athletic director, Lynn Schwartz, said, "Both men are 100 percent committed to coaching track. They coach for fall, winter and spring going six days a week.

They take their work with their kids very seriously and our teams perform very well."

Schwartz said the dedication shown by the coaches rubs off on the players, leading to success on the track. "The kids appreciate their coaches' commitment to the sport," he said. "We have kids that are very serious this year, and they know they are getting fine coaching."



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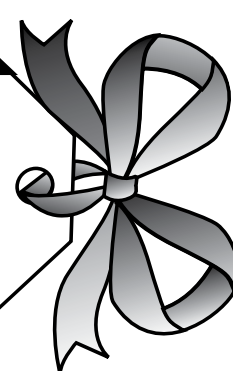
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