

## 250 Local Kids Swim, Bike, Run in First MSF Jr. Triathlon

by Jill Simpson of the Mamaroneck Schools Foundation, photos by Fred Levine

(October 4, 2006) The day dawned bright and crisp—a bit cool, perhaps, for running outside in just a wet bathing suit—but the perfect culmination to many months of planning for the first Mamaroneck Schools Foundation Junior Triathlon. When John Steigerwald, a nine-time Ironman triathlete and Larchmont father of two, first approached the foundation with his dream of creating a mini-triathlon for kids, there were many who worried that the complicated logistics would make it too difficult to pull off. But after many months of work, a team led by Annemette Cliggott-Perlt, Beth Grinnell and Joanne Fryer made it all happen on October 1.



The organizers had completely “sold out” the event as children from ages 7 to 17 filled all 250 available slots.



The 250 triathletes were organized into waves to await their turn in the Hommocks pool.

The triathletes showed up ready to swim, bike and run at the early hour of 7:30 on Saturday morning. They first shed their sweatsuits and filled the Hommocks gym in well-organized “waves” to wait their turn in the pool. Wet from their swim, they raced outdoors to pull on shorts and sneakers and jump on their bikes. Next they returned the bikes and dashed off running. Each age group completed courses of varying lengths, ranging from 25 yards to 225 yards of swimming; 1½ to 7 miles of biking; and ½ mile to 1½ miles of running. The first finishers crossed the line in under half an hour, even sooner than anticipated.





"It was a great opportunity for different people in the community to come together and enjoy something positive, healthy and energizing," said Melina Vourlekis, a vice president of the Mamaroneck Schools Foundation. "It was a fantastic day, planned incredibly well," added parent Jennifer Conley, whose son Peter placed third in his age group. "All the parents beamed and cheered as their children made it to the finish line—everyone who participated felt like a winner," said Laura Lavan, who had three boys competing in the event. Nine-year-old participant Patrick Murray agreed, "It was great! It was fun to do three different sports combined, and I thought the distances were just right for our age group."

Sponsors New York Sports Club, e.b. barrett, and Sotheby's Realty underwrote the costs so that the foundation could forgo its typical fundraising role and offer this event for a very nominal fee. Many other local businesses contributed raffle prizes to add to the fun of the day, while radio station Z100 played tunes.



"The day went beyond my dreams in terms of how smoothly everything went and the excitement so visible on the kids' faces," said John Steigerwald. "The first time doing any event is always a bit of an experiment," said Mamaroneck Schools Foundation president Barbara Henkind, "but we were thrilled that it turned out so successfully, and really achieved our goal of bringing kids and families from all six schools together to focus on health, wellness and being active."



Some of the junior triathletes posed with the sponsors (back row from left): Alex Alimanestianu of New York Sports Club; Barbara Henkind, president of the Mamaroneck Schools Foundation; Alan and Ellen Grad and family, of e.b. barrett; and Cindy Landis of Sotheby's Realty.

## TOP FINISHERS

### BOYS 7-8

1. Tyler Sakakeeny 17:33
2. Julien Aversano 19:19
3. Teddy Knowles 19:56

### GIRLS 7-8

1. Shari Rauls 18:12
2. Katelynn Cotter 20:15
3. Freya Cantwell 21:16

### BOYS 9-10

1. Ryan LeBlanc 17:41
2. Forrest Simpson 18:01
3. Eric Alimestianu 18:49

### GIRLS 9-10

1. Katherine Grinnell 17:29
2. Leonie Rauls 18:56
3. Morgan Stein 19:20

### BOYS 11-12

1. Robert Grinnell 27:39
2. Jake Danehy 27:54
3. Peter Conley 28:40

### GIRLS 11-12

1. Tanita Leary 26:03
2. Molly Cohen 30:03
3. Meaghan Fitzgerald 31:53

### BOY 13-14

1. Chandler Grinnell 26:30
2. George Sheehan 30:36
3. James Currey 32:39

### GIRLS 13-14

1. Jessica Damiano 41:22
2. Julianne Cuba 41:22 (tie)

### BOYS 15-18

1. Brandon Fields 32:19