

Greater Huntsville “Prime Air” Delivers

by

Ken Philippart

Images by Alan Lowrey and Lisa Philippart

For the fourth year in a row, the Greater Huntsville Section fielded a team in Huntsville’s version of the famed Iditarod, the Annual Carts4Hearts 5K race, to help those less fortunate. The March 7, 2020 race raised money and food donations for the Downtown Rescue Mission (DRM). DRM is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that provides food, clothing, shelter and other services to the homeless in the Huntsville area. The race involved teams of six costumed



Theresa Jehle, Ken Philippart and Lindsey Blair put the finishing touches on the team’s cart before the race.

“mushers” pushing and pulling a themed shopping cart for five kilometers through the streets of downtown Huntsville in a timed race. The teams collected donations of money and food for DRM prior to and at the race and competed for various awards.

This year’s team was led by Section Young Professionals Director Lindsey Blair. In a nod to the booming Unmanned Aerial Systems market, the construction team of Lindsey, Membership Director Theresa Jehle, Alix Villanueva, Lauren Fisher and Ken

Philippart, settled on a commercial drone delivery service as the theme for their cart. The team met on a sunny Saturday afternoon to transform their shopping cart into a quad copter delivery drone, replete with pinwheel rotors, a simulated telemetry package, and a suspended package to be delivered. They adorned the drone with logos reading “AIAA Prime Air.”

On race day, while some team members assembled the cart, others, including families and friends, collected the team’s donations of 393 lbs of food and \$225 to benefit the DRM and the Huntsville community. The section gives a special thank you to Ms. Gilda Battista who donated over 100 lbs of food to the cause.



Lisa Philippart awaiting weighing of the team’s food donations.



The team mugs for the camera before the race.

immediately after completing the race.

The Carts4Hearts Race was a meaningful way for section members to come together to use their engineering talents, promote AIAA and have a good time while helping the needy within the Huntsville community. It was a true team effort. In keeping with the theme, AIAA Prime Air delivered!

The team's runners, dressed as clouds, maneuvered the cart through downtown Huntsville. The official 6-member run team included Tammy Statham, Theresa Jehle, Erin Pierson, Alix Villanueva, Brittany Searcy and Lauren Fisher. Though not required by the rules to do so, team captain Lindsey Blair accompanied the team throughout the course to cheer them on. Former Section Chair and Region II Director Alan Lowrey likewise accompanied the team for most of the distance, going above and beyond the call of duty as the team's official photographer.

While the team was not the first to cross the finish line, the runners finished strong with the cart intact and their spirits high. Ideas were already being floated for next year's design



The team hits its stride on the course.