



“My grandson, Michael, took his life 15 months ago. He was 21 and it was a real shock to us all. We did (the race) last year and we’re doing it again this year. He was a football hero at Rutherford High School and 55 was his number. His younger brother and cousins all took the number 55 and that was before this all happened. Because they loved Michael and he was just a lovable kid.”

–John Melfa, Toms River from team “55 Forever.”

“We’re here to support the Culley Strong Foundation. Our neighbor who lives across the street from us, Sean Culley, died by suicide four months ago. He’s been our neighbor for the past 16 years. It’s quite special supporting his family and Sean’s memory.”

–Dan Iadonisi, 64, Bricktown from team “#CulleyStrong.”

“I grew up with Lori (Jarck, whose son – Pierce, a junior at RFH – died by suicide in 2017). Unfortunately, there’s also been a lot of suicide in my family over the years. It’s just a good cause to get out there and support. We have all of us running, my husband and mom, who just turned 75. I’m picking up bibs for all of us for the race.”

–Laurie Smith, Fair Haven, from team “Pierce’s P.A.L.S.”



“I first heard about the race from one of my best friends, who’s a teacher at RBC. Anything I can do to support the high school kids I try to do and think it’s a great community event. It’s nice to see all three high schools, that may be rivals at times, come together for a unified purpose.”

–David Cardamone, 33, Little Silver

“We are very good friends of the Jarcks. These kinds of things are happening with too great a frequency for parents to stomach. People feel there’s some level of prevention that can come about when awareness is raised. It’s also about being together as a community, and with family and friends, who are supporting the same idea.”

–Peter Martin, 53, Fair Haven, from team “Pierce’s P.A.L.S.”

“I’m running for Jack Moore (of Fair Haven who died by suicide in 2016). My family is starting a whole new group to end the stigma (of suicide) and help kids to feel comfortable to seek treatment. This one hits home. I used to babysit Jack. hey are family friends my whole life.”

–Marissa Lecardi, 30, Oceanport, from team “#loveyoumorejackmoore.”

