

Race enthusiast Dave Gorman to be honored at today's Brockton holiday parade

By Erik Potter Enterprise Staff Writer

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Race enthusiast Dave Gorman will receive the first James Edgar Service Award at today's Brockton holiday parade.

BROCKTON — For a dozen years, Dave Gorman has put together the city's Jingle Bell Run, which last year raised more than \$10,000 for The Enterprise's Helping Hands Fund benefiting local charities, many of which serve children. For nearly 30 years, the Brockton native has organized the Kids Road Races at D.W. Field Park, which have instilled generations of children with self-confidence and a love of running.

This afternoon, the city will honor Gorman when he receives the first James Edgar Service Award at the Greater Brockton Holiday Parade on behalf of the "unsung heroes" behind children's activities in the city.

"There's a lot of people out there who do a lot of work," said Gorman, 63, who organizes about 30 races a year, including the Kids Road Races and the Jingle Bell Run. "It's really good for someone to step up and recognize what these people do."

That "someone" is the Greater Brockton Holiday Parade Committee. To celebrate Brockton's past and build a sense of community in the present, this year's parade committee instituted the James Edgar Service Award to honor local residents who make a difference in the lives of Brockton youth.

The award, to be presented this year by parade grand marshal U.S. Sen. Scott Brown, is in remembrance of Brockton's James Edgar, the country's first department store Santa and a local philanthropist whose downtown retail store bore his name.

John Merian, chairman of the parade committee, said they wanted to honor Edgar and spotlight Brockton's history. Edgar built a reputation as a benefactor to children, paying for the city's annual Independence Day parade and children's picnic, Merian said.

"We can have a holiday parade — everybody has one," Merian. "We're trying to create a theme of bringing people together and celebrating Brockton, and that has a lot to do with James Edgar."

Good Samaritan Medical Center is sponsoring the award, which will feature a permanent plaque bearing the names of all recipients on the outside of the downtown parking garage where Edgar's store was located.

A second plaque will be given to Gorman. He will also ride, along with local children, on a James Edgar Award float in the parade.

"It's a great award; it's great that people are being recognized. I'm honored to be the first one," Gorman said.

Gorman is organizing this year's 12th annual Jingle Bell Run, a two-mile fun run with runners in holiday costumes that is the primary fundraiser for The Enterprise's Helping Hands fund. This year's run will be held on Dec. 11, at 1 p.m. at the Westgate Hotel and Conference Center, 195 Westgate Drive.

Gorman took over organizing the annual Kids Road Races when the school district gave up the activity due to budget cuts in the early 1980s.

The races are a series of 2.2-mile runs in the spring and fall for children ages 4-14. The races are noncompetitive, though there are awards given out at the end, which are funded by the \$1 suggested donation for each participant.

At the time he took over organizing the races, Gorman did it because his two children wanted to keep running in them every week.

Asked why he still organizes the races now that his kids are in their 30s, Gorman said, "I think if I didn't do it, it wouldn't happen."

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