

YTI criminal justice majors lend a hand at Can-Am games

By Rick Lee

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UPDATED: 07/17/2014 10:51:42 PM EDT



Volunteer Dennis Barry of Glen Rock helps direct the competitors along Accomac Road Thursday during the Can-Am cycling race which began out of Wrightsville. (Jason Plotkin — Daily Record/Sunday News)

With all of the officers, firefighters and EMTs strung out along a 20-mile race course in Wrightsville on Thursday, former active-duty Marine and YTI student Anthony Cosentino could not do much networking, one of the goals of volunteering for the Can-Am Police-Fire Games.

But, hoping to land a job as a corrections officer at York County Prison after graduation, he was eager to talk to anyone who even remotely knows Warden Mary Sabol.

Originally from Lancaster and now living in York, Cosentino, 36, is halfway through the YTI program.

Cosentino was one of more than 400 volunteers from various companies and organizations who turned out to help the games go on at various venues this week.



11-year-old Isiah James volunteered to help alert other volunteers that competitors were coming down the winding Codorus Furnace Road on Thursday during the Can-Am cycling race that began in Wrightsville. (Jason Plotkin — Daily Record/Sunday News)

Of the 40 YTI volunteers, all criminal justice majors, criminal justice and first-response program director Ross Deck said. "It gives them a chance to network with people already working in the industry."

The week-long games included emergency responders from across the United States and Canada.

Deck said YTI Career Institute graduates more students than there are positions available in the immediate area.

"There are so many positions in law enforcement and corrections," he said. "Most people come (into YTI) thinking about becoming a municipal police officer or a state trooper. "But there are lots of opportunities throughout the country, if you're willing to move."

Crystal Hipps, YTI career services specialist, said volunteering for the games also gives students a chance to broaden their resumes.

"Some of our students are just out of high school — traditional students," she said. "Most have a weak resume or no resume. This gives them a chance to strengthen it."

Deck said among the courses taught at YTI are traffic and crowd control. While there was not a large crowd of spectators, the race course winding through public roads north of Wrightsville had a number of intersections that needed to be safeguarded by the YTI volunteers for the bikers.

"In my opinion, and I'm old, young people these days are losing their communication skills because of technology," Deck said. "This forces them to communicate. It enhances their skills."

In the last three months of the YTI program, students are required to participate in an "externship," Hipps said.

"We try to get them placed in areas they are interested in," she said. "We call it a 12-week interview."

She said the Lancaster County Sheriff's Office hired five YTI students after their externships there.

"It gives them a chance to see if it (the job they are seeking) fits," Deck said. "You either shine like a star or sink like a rock."



Jason Yeager volunteered to count the laps of competitors as they biked along Accomac Road during the Can-Am cycling race which began in Wrightsville on Thursday. (Jason Plotkin — Daily Record/Sunday News)

Cosentino, a sergeant who received the Purple Heart during one of his two tours in Iraq when he was hit with an anti-tank grenade, hopes to land an externship at York County Prison.

Hipps and Deck are betting he'd be a good hire.

Contact Rick Lee at 717-495-1782.

Volunteers thanked

Ann Waltman, the York County regional manager of the Greater Pennsylvania and West Virginia Make-A-Wish, said it would have been impossible to put on the 2014 Can-Am Police-Fire Games at more than 30 venues scattered across the county without a legion of helpers.

And Waltman said more than 400 local people stepped up to volunteer for anything from keeping the participants hydrated to conducting traffic control during the week-long event.

Following are some of the local companies and organizations who Waltman said provided groups of volunteers for the games:

Members 1st Federal Credit Union

Graham Packaging Company

Buchart Horn Inc.

Penn-Air & Hydraulics

YTI Career Institute

And Wellspring provided medical support for the games.

Make-A-Wish is a beneficiary of the Can-Am Police-Fire Games.

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YTI student Anthony Cosentino, left, shares a laugh with YTI program director Ross Deck and YTI career services specialist Crystal Hipps at the finish line of the Can-Am Games' cycling road race in Wrightsville on Thursday. Cosentino, a former Marine, was on of a dozen YTI students who volunteered for traffic control during the 20-mile race. (Rick Lee — Daily Record/Sunday News)

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