

# For Scott Bessette, race is therapy

## *RACE, from 1*

good times he and his sister had.

When he's out on that road, he can close his eyes and feel her there, running side by side with him. When he opens his eyes back up, though, she's nowhere to be found. Instead, in her place are countless friends, countless family members and people he doesn't even know running for her, doing their part to keep her memory alive.

"It's a little overwhelming," Scott said after Sunday's race. "We're very lucky to have a lot of these people here every year to really take care of us. I mean, this is therapy for us. The reason we started to do this is, when you have a tragic loss, you try to make sense of why everything transpires and you try to make sense of what life really means and having a beautiful day like this where people come out and share their love and have a good time doing it" means a lot.

Sunday's Run4Kerri race couldn't have gone much better. In addition to a beautiful hot and sunny day, the event was blessed with an all-time attendance figure—nearly 1,000 runners entered—and, with nearly all the proceeds going towards scholarships for future SK athletes, the event was an undeniable success.

But even if no one showed up and even if it was just Scott on the road, Sunday would still have been a positive experience.

See, they say that time heals all wounds. To an extent, that is true. You go about your normal life, your normal business and for 364 days a year, it's easy to push the pain away. But every once in a while, the feelings come rushing back.

For Scott, the Run4Kerri race is a chance to welcome those feelings, to embrace the

pain and use it as a positive experience instead of a negative one.

"The first year, it was more about tragedy and more about death and almost running away from it," he said. "Now, it's kind of running toward it. I'm out there and I kind of feel the breeze and I think of her and now it's the memories, the good memories and not the death."

Scott finished Sunday's race in 21 minutes, 20 seconds. That time was just under two minutes less than winner Patrick Tarpy of Providence and good enough for fifth place overall.

After the race, Scott walked around, thanking participants for showing up. Whether they were longtime running buddies or complete strangers, Scott felt a connection with them. This race, this event, bonds him to the community where he grew up, it reminds him of where he and he family came from.

More than anything, it reminds him of Kerri. He remembers her smile, the way she would kid around, the memories they would share.

As time goes on, the individual memories Scott has of his sister may fade away on a day-to-day basis. But when it's time for the Run4Kerri, he thinks of nothing else.

When he's out there on the course running, alone with his thoughts, all he can think about is her, the time they spent together, the memories they made.

So what would Kerri think of this race? What would she think of the way it's grown year after year?

Scott ponders that for a second, smiles, and finds an answer.

"I think my sister would say 'What's with all the love?'" he said. "And kind of give me a little bit of a hard time."