

# Blakefield teacher got around on milestone birthday

Most guys celebrate their 50th birthday by blowing out the candles on a cake. A few opt for something more strenuous, such as a day of sport fishing or a round of golf. Then there is Chris Cucuzzella, a physics teacher and coach at Loyola Blakefield, who marked that milestone Nov. 20 by running 50 kilometers on campus, just over 31 miles. The past president of the Baltimore Road Runners Club, Cucuzzella ran to raise funds and awareness for Back on My Feet, which helps empower those experiencing homelessness through physical activity, and Loyola's Class of 1964 Endowed Scholarship Fund.

A member of its class of 1982, Cucuzzella ran cross country and wrestled for the Dons, and hasn't shown much sign of slowing down. Less than a decade ago, at age 41, he notched his personal best for the marathon, 3 hours, 2 minutes. On Nov. 20, he cranked out more than three dozen laps on a 1.5-mile course around the Loyola Blakefield athletic fields, avoiding the dip down to Wheeler Hall, and the climb back up.

"I chose the flatter course," he said, "but it got monotonous."



Family, friends and some of his former runners helped pass the time, as Cucuzzella started around 8 a.m. and finished during the lunch hour, clocking in at 4 hours, 40 minutes, about 9 minutes per mile.

Ryan Stasiowski (class of 2007), Greg Jubb ('07) and Greg Lange ('08) joined him at the start. Later, two of his three brothers joined in, Neil ('86) and Paul ('89). His other brother, Mark ('84), would have been there, if he had not been preparing for the 53rd annual JFK 50-Miler, which goes off Nov. 22 in Hagerstown. Also keeping Cucuzzella company were his wife, Jeanne Pinto, McDonogh School coach Jeff Sanborn and Ben Hosford, one of his current runners.

Afterward, Cucuzzella got cleaned up and directed indoor track and field practice. He's the Dons' head coach and an assistant in outdoor track and cross country, where Loyola Blakefield has won six straight Maryland Interscholastic Athletic Association and two straight East Coast Jesuit Invitational titles.

After that, he went out to dinner at the Cheesecake Factory with his wife and their children, Sam and Mia, to pig out and reflect.

"The nice thing about 50," he said, "is that I don't feel the need to top this."