

The University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Athletic Department is again teaming up with the Southeastern Massachusetts Shrine Club to co-sponsor the 37th annual UMass Dartmouth Cross Country Invitational for the seventh consecutive year.

The day's activities are an opportunity for the members of the Shrine Club of Southeastern Massachusetts to raise public awareness for its work as "the world's greatest philanthropy" the Shriner's Hospitals for Children. There will also be two Shrine Clowns present from 9:00-11:00 A.M. to entertain the masses. With 500,000 Shrine members in North America Shriner's International supports the Shriners Hospitals which are a network of 22 pediatric hospitals which specialize in orthopedic, burn, spinal cord injury care, and cleft lip and palette care. There are hospitals located throughout the United States, Canada, and Mexico which provide free care to children under the age of 18 of their financial need or their relationship to a Shriner. The Shriner's Hospitals also provide research in the areas of spinal cord care and burn care. Moreover Shriners International and the Shriner's Hospitals for Children provide education for prevention of burn injuries and lawnmower related injuries charge of free to the public. The Shriners have two hospitals in Massachusetts, including the Shriners Burns Hospital in Boston and the Shriners Hospital for Children in Springfield, providing orthopedic care and research.

The cross country meet is held at UMass Dartmouth today Saturday, Sept. 19, 2009 beginning at 10:30 am. Parking for the event will be available in lot seven on the UMass Dartmouth campus. This event has the longest running cross country race of its kind in New England. Over 1,000 of the top NCAA Division III male and female cross country runners and teams from colleges throughout the country will ascend on UMass Dartmouth today for a day of athletic competition.

A series of four individual cross-country races will be staged on the UMass Dartmouth cross country course, beginning with the women's sub-varsity race at 10:30 am, followed by the women's varsity race at 11:15 am. The men's varsity race is schedule to go off at 12 noon with the final race of the day, the men's sub-varsity race to start at 12:45 pm. An awards ceremony will cap the day's events at 2 pm inside the Tripp Athletic Center.

For more info about Shriners International, The Shriners Hospitals for Children, or the Shrine Club of Southeastern Mass and upcoming events go to their website: [www.shriners22.blogspot.com](http://www.shriners22.blogspot.com) or [www.shriners22.com](http://www.shriners22.com).