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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Race's Finishing Touch: Massage

Just to get the jitters over with, Karen Briskin of Cheshire says she participated in a half-marathon in Niantic before attempting her first-ever full marathon at the 14th Annual United Technologies Greater Hartford Marathon this past Saturday. However, Briskin wasn't training to run the marathon, she was honing her skills as a massage therapy student giving pre- and post-event massages to those who did run the chilly fall road race that lapped the state's capital. In fact, the Hartford marathon served as a mid-term practical exam for Briskin and many other students who attend the Connecticut Center for Massage Therapy's program at the Newington campus.

"It was really, really fun," says Briskin, who gave massages to a dozen runners during the event, ranging from college students to men and women in their fifties. "I love the spirit and feeling of a race."

Laura Stevenson-Flom, the CCMT faculty member who coordinated the school's participation at this year's Hartford marathon, says that the 84 CCMT-trained therapists and students at this year's event were "very busy" giving massages from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. She estimates that they gave massage to as many as 800 of the 5,000 or so runners who took part in the marathon.

Rows of massage tables were spread out underneath a large white tent, where students overseen by their teachers gave sports massages to the fully dressed runners still wearing their race numbers.

Massage therapy is a crucial component to the performance of an athlete. Prior to an event, vigorous massage helps enliven the muscles, increasing circulation and tonus, preparing them to perform the task ahead. After an event, massage is performed at a slower pace with the intention of alleviating cramping and soreness and allowing the muscles to return to a resting state.

CCMT has been providing volunteer massage therapists to the Hartford marathon for over 10 years to the benefit of both the athletes as well as the students.