



Mike Thompson, e-learning developer for Susquehanna, stands with Kidsburg Chair Deb Huckans after the race, which was successful despite a light morning shower.

Online educator spurs \$3,500 donation for physical fitness

Having a safe place to playfully stay active helps children develop physical and social skills and maintain a healthy weight. Understanding the value of a playground prompted Mike Thompson, an E-Learning developer for PPL's Technical Development and Improvement group, to raise more than \$3,500 for a new one in Bloomsburg.

Thompson organized a 5K run/walk May 11 in the Bloomsburg Town Park, home of the former Kidsburg playground, which was taken down shortly after the 2011 flood made it unusable. The large wooden structure, built in the early 1990s through donations and volunteer help, provided a creative play area for local children.

"Being able to run, climb and pretend is an important part of growing up," Thompson said. "Also, I know from personal experience with losing weight that if physical activity is fun, kids will play longer and harder."

More than 150 people participated in the event. The money will be donated to Kidsburg 2.0/BTPIA, a community group that is raising funds needed to rebuild a playground in a higher location in the Bloomsburg Town Park. More about the community effort can be found at <http://kidsburg.org>.

PPL supported the event with a financial donation, T-shirts and a banner for the event. PPL employees Mimi Mylin, senior information specialist; Bob Rodriguez, stockman; and Lisa Helsel, senior engineer; helped with registration and tracking runners' times. Co-workers from Thompson's work group, Dennis Knepper, director; Paul Ward, manager; and Keri Krasley, project manager; drove up from the Allentown area to run in the event.