HUNTINGTON, W.Va. — Businesses have stepped up to fight the hunger problem in the Tri-State.

Thirteen local and corporate businesses will sponsor the Outrunning Hunger 5K Run/Walk. The race is hosted by Helping Hungry Hearts, a student-run public relations agency from Marshall University’s W. Page Pitt School of Journalism and Mass Communications. The agency hopes to raise awareness and money for the Huntington Area Food Bank (HAFB). The race will be at 9 a.m. April 10 at Pullman Square in Huntington, W.Va.

“Overall, this community has been extremely supportive of the food bank and the agencies,” said Brooke Ash, assistant director of the HAFB. “I think they like helping out and giving back as much as they can. I think that there could be a misconception about hunger. However, I think that there’s an overall positive attitude about what we do and about the agencies we serve.”

A silver sponsorship packages includes a logo on the race T-shirt, insert in the race registration bag. It also includes a logo on event brochures, posters and the Helping Hungry Hearts Web site.

The following businesses are silver sponsors:
- American Electric Power
- Cabell County EMS
- Cabell-Huntington Hospital
- City Tan Express
- Fruth Pharmacy
- Giovanni’s
- Route 60 Music Company
- The Union Pub & Grill

A bronze sponsorship package includes a logo on the Helping Hungry Hearts Web site, name on posters, name on event brochures and an insert in the race registration bag. Bronze sponsors cost $100.

The following businesses are bronze sponsors:
- Hometown Sportswear
- Hot Corner
- MedExpress
- Mug & Pia
- Towne Place Suites by Marriott

Money collected from sponsorships will go toward T-shirts, facility rentals and other race supplies. All funds that are not directly used for race-related items will be given to the HAFB to help provide food to 250 agencies in the HAFB’s 17-county service area.
Businesses and individuals have also donated items for the race and its related activities. Road ID donated $275 worth of merchandise, which includes race bibs and gift certificates. Contempo Trophy also gave the agency a deal on medals and ribbons for race winners. Other businesses donated coupons for free food and other items to give to race and raffle winners.

“It’s been wonderful to see just how supportive and generous the businesses in our community are,” said Whitney Parsley, Helping Hungry Hearts co-director. “It’s so nice to know that businesses in our community are willing to help with such a great cause. The sponsors of our race are so important. Without them, we couldn’t do this.”

The Helping Hungry Hearts promotions team went out into the community and secured sponsorships and donations. Ashley Adkins, a member of the Helping Hungry Hearts promotions team, said the best part of obtaining sponsorships in the community is to raise the level of awareness for the hunger issue.

“I believe that getting the word out about the HAFB is very important because almost everyone is or has been affected by hunger themselves or at least knows someone who has been affected,” Adkins said. “By informing the public about the HAFB, we’re showing people that there is a way to help and just how important it is to those who are less fortunate.”

Angela Sundstrom, another member of the Helping Hungry Hearts promotions team, said the companies she contacted about sponsorships had a very positive view of the HAFB. She said she likes to get the community involved.

“Many Huntington and Tri-State residents have no idea how much of an issue hunger is in the area,” Sundstrom said. “When they hear the statistics, many are eager to help. In my opinion, getting the word out about the HAFB is important because people in the area are struggling. If their story is not told, then who will help them? Giving individuals hope when they are down on their luck, even with a simple meal, makes a difference.”

For more information about Helping Hungry Hearts or to register for the Outrunning Hunger 5K Run/Walk, please visit www.marshall.edu/helpinghungryhearts or e-mail the agency at helpinghungryhearts@marshall.edu. Also contact co-director Whitney Parsley at 304-389-0390. To learn more about the HAFB, please contact Ash at 304-523-6029 or brooke@hafb.org.

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The Huntington Area Food Bank (HAFB) is a private, nonprofit organization founded in 1983 and based in Huntington, W.Va. The HAFB is affiliated with Feeding America, the country’s largest hunger-relief organization. The HAFB serves more than 250 agencies in 17 counties in West Virginia, southeastern Ohio and eastern Kentucky. The HAFB’s main mission is to curb the hunger problem by distributing nutritious food products through its member agency network. The HAFB currently helps to feed 91,000 people per month in the Tri-State area.