**SACRED HEART UNIVERSITY NEWS**

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**For Immediate Release**

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Press Release:

**SACRED HEART ALUM HONORED FOR PROVIDING MEDICAL CARE DURING FAIRFIELD HALF MARATHON**

Website (55 characters or less):

Marathon Miracle: Alum’s Actions Aid Heatstroke Victims

Website homepage headline (**40 characters or less**):

Alum Acts Fast to Aid Heatstroke Victims

Subhead:

*Hartford HealthCare names SHU graduate and adjunct instructor Sean Cronan a hero for lifesaving measures*

FAIRFIELD, Conn.—Sacred Heart University alum and instructor Sean Cronan ’18, ’20 will never forget Sunday, June 2, 2024.

It was an exceptionally warm morning, and Cronan was gearing up to run the [Fairfield Half Marathon & 5K.](https://www.fairfieldhalf.space/half-marathon%20&%205K) Cronan, in addition to teaching at SHU, is also a full-time physical therapist for [Hartford Healthcare](https://hartfordhealthcare.org/). In his personal life, he is a running fanatic and was going to attempt his personal best in reaching the finish line along the shores of Jennings Beach.

However, Cronan’s finish time soon became secondary. The day’s rising temperatures, even hotter in direct sunlight, led to severe heat exhaustion for two runners. Cronan, a graduate of SHU’s [doctor of physical therapy program](https://www.sacredheart.edu/majors--programs/bachelors-doctor-of-physical-therapy-dpt-dual-degree-program/), knew he had to help.

When Cronan found a distressed runner at mile eight, he realized immediately that the athlete’s movements and impaired consciousness suggested external heatstroke. He called for medical care right away but knew that runners can experience organ failure when not cooled down soon enough. So, instead of staying put and waiting for emergency medical services (EMS) to arrive, Cronan brought the runner to the nearby beach.

“Usually when an athlete is experiencing severe heat exhaustion, we transfer them to an ice bath at our disposal, but on the [marathon] course there was no choice but to bring the runner directly to the Long Island Sound to cool them down,” Cronan said.

Adhering to the lessons he learned from an acute injury and illness management class, Cronan held the runner in the water for 20 minutes to cool them down. The EMS arrived shortly after to transfer the runner to a local hospital. Physicians there told the athlete’s family that without Cronan’s quick action, their loved one would have likely suffered organ damage waiting for transport.

Cronan’s efforts that day did not end there. At mile 10, he noticed a runner in a similar predicament. Farther from the water, he quickly enlisted the help of bystanders and neighbors. With Cronan’s assistance and guidance, they made a makeshift ice bath in a cooler and were able to cool down the runner before a medical transport arrived.

For Cronan’s herculean efforts that day, Hartford HealthCare recently honored him as a health care hero. The award is given to a Hartford Healthcare employee who demonstrates an exemplary knowledge and bravery in the field of health care and is shared throughout the company’s community.

Cronan credited SHU’s classrooms and professors for much of the skill and confidence he displayed that June morning. “I attribute my competence and confidence in these situations to the courses I took at SHU, especially one through Hartford HealthCare led by the president of the [Connecticut American Physical Therapy Association](https://aptact.org/), Stefanie Bourassa,” Cronan said. “I wouldn’t have known what to do that day without it.”

One of his professors, [Jason Grimes](https://www.sacredheart.edu/phonebook/jason-grimes.php), never doubted that Cronan would be able to handle himself in such a scenario. “As one of our tutorial leaders, Sean thrived with the students and consistently received outstanding evaluations. He simply continues to go on and succeed with amazing accomplishments, such as this truly heroic event at the Fairfield Half Marathon, where he used his knowledge, training and passion to make a real difference,” Grimes said. “He is truly a standout clinician and human being.”

As an adjunct instructor, Cronan uses his experiences to teach his students. “I’m incredibly grateful for the training and experience I got at SHU. Without it, I wouldn’t have been able to help those runners,” he said. “I’m proud to now pass on my knowledge from that day so future students can have the same confidence I did.”

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***About Sacred Heart University***

As the second-largest Catholic university in New England, and one of the fastest-growing private doctoral institutions in the U.S., Sacred Heart University is a national leader in shaping higher education for the 21st century. SHU offers more than 100 undergraduate, graduate and doctoral programs on its Fairfield, Conn., campus. Sacred Heart also has a campus in Dingle, Ireland, and offers online programs. More than 10,000 students attend the University’s eight colleges and schools: College of Arts & Sciences; School of Communication, Media & the Arts; School of Social Work; School of Computer Science & Engineering; College of Health Professions; the Isabelle Farrington College of Education & Human Development; the Jack Welch College of Business & Technology and the Dr. Susan L. Davis, R.N., & Richard J. Henley College of Nursing. Sacred Heart, a Laudato Si’ campus, stands out from other Catholic institutions as it was established and led by laity. The contemporary Catholic university is rooted in the rich Catholic intellectual tradition and the liberal arts, and at the same time cultivates students to be forward thinkers who enact change—in their own lives, professions and in their communities. The Princeton Review includes SHU in its *Best 390 Colleges: 2025 Edition*, and *Best Business Schools: 2024 Edition*. Sacred Heart is home to the award-winning, NPR-affiliate station, WSHU Public Radio, a Division I athletics program and an impressive performing arts program that includes choir, band, dance and theatre. [www.sacredheart.edu](http://www.sacredheart.edu/)

[View SHU’s Faculty Experts Here](https://www.sacredheart.edu/aboutshu/facultyexperts/?utm_source=press%20release&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=press%20and%20media)