

# Morgan Hill charity run entering 25th year

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One afternoon in 1984, Marilyn Gadway came up with an idea that hit the ground running.

It was for a charity jog, an event she and fellow members of the American Association of University Women would organize to further their effort of raising money for scholarly young women.

The idea was simple: charge patrons a small donation/fee to jog a few kilometers through the western edge of Morgan Hill.

"It was a good way to raise money while giving people a chance to get out and exercise. It was a hit," recalled Gadway, a charter member of the Morgan Hill Chapter of AAUW.

And it continues to be a quarter of a century later.

Philanthropic runners will take to the streets again April 13, trotting the annual AAUW Wildflower Run that blossoms more each year. It draws hundreds of participants — including families — who run a 2, 5, or 10K, each beginning and ending at Live Oak High School.

"It's grown a lot," Gadway said before a long pause. "I can't believe it's been 25 years. I think we raised about \$1,000 the first year."

Last year, the race brought in \$20,349 — not counting a \$2,000 deduction toward the purchase of timing equipment. The net income saw a near \$3,100 increase from 2006.

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## WILDFLOWER RUN ■ AAUW Charity race raised record-high income in 2007

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"Financially, it was our best year yet," said Barbara Palmer, who's coordinating the run for a fifth and final time this year. "That's the most rewarding part about it because we take a lot of pride in what we do. We want to raise as much money as we can for these young women."

Palmer took over as run director in 2004 and has been in office for the longest consecutive term in history. During that time, the run's list of sponsors has grown tremendously.

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Wildflower Run director  
Barbara Palmer

“  
When I started as director, I thought, 'We really do so much work for this. We might as well get as much out of it as we can,' she said. 'We've branched out to new sponsors, and our business sponsor program and individual sponsor program have both increased.'”

Gadway witnessed another financial boon in the 1980s when the race was opened to men.

"We did that because we



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The AAUW has been bringing running families out to exercise for a charitable cause since 1984.

wanted more money!" she said. "The race was open only to women for a long time. It's a good thing we changed that."

A proposed 27.2 percent of this year's proceeds is allotted for local scholarships. As with last year, \$3,600 is going toward the Blaine/Cate American Fellowship Endowment, a \$100,000 scholarship — named in honor of founding members Irene Blaine and Barbara Cate — started in 1991 when Palmer was branch president.

"We started it in honor of our 10th anniversary," Palmer said. "We decided to do something big, and branches all around were absolutely in awe because, at the time, we had maybe 80 or 85 members, and to have a branch that small say, 'Yes, we're going to fund this \$100,000 scholarship in 10 years — everyone looked like, 'You can't do that!'"

The Morgan Hill Chapter did by 2001 — but didn't stop there. Members have since upped the account to \$119,680 while channeling interest into a separate post-High School graduate scholarship.

"It gives women an opportunity not to have to

### 2008 AAUW Wildflower Run

The annual Morgan Hill charity event is making its 25th running.

• Sunday April 13, 2008

• 2K, 5K, 10K start and finish at Live Oak High School

• Registration is \$25 by April 4

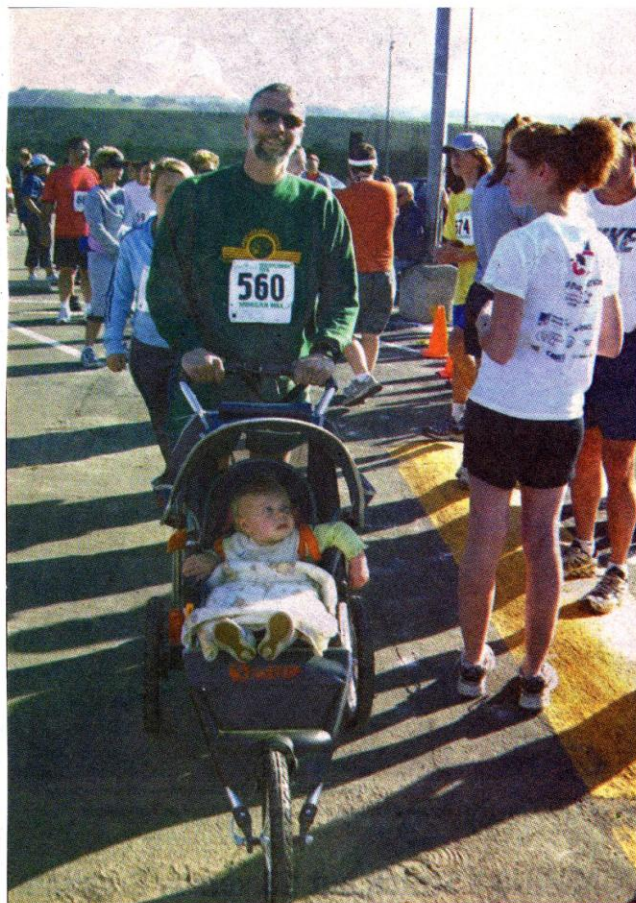
• For more information, visit [www.aauw-morganhill.org](http://www.aauw-morganhill.org)

work and to be more focused on studies," Palmer said. "It's just another way we can provide for others, and it's due to the success we've been able to have with fundraisers like the run."

Entry fees haven't been the only source of income. The AAUW also raises money off Wildflower Run T-shirts, a popular item each year. The 2008 edition is periwinkle blue and, like its predecessors, doesn't feature any sponsor names.

"That's a small tradition we're trying to keep up," Palmer said. "It's more personal for us to give the runners a shirt with our name and the race's name on it."

Looking back at the years since the run's inception, Gadway cannot help but marvel with pride. She gets lost in the figures, much like the memories.



She remembered a rainy edition, which she and other organizers mulled postponing.

"It was pouring outside I remember," she said. "We debated possibly moving it right until the day of the race, but then we went ahead with it and it turned out to be one of the more fun years."

Then, there was the time Elena Moreno, a longtime

branch member, took it upon herself to gussy up the course by strewing wildflower seeds along it.

Cal-Trans workers followed her each year after, armed with herbicide.

"Memories like that make the run special," Gadway said.

Not all anecdotes are as humorous. There was, of course, the infamous year the race got permanently

relocated following an incident involving an angry homeowner, who didn't like seeing his front yard cluttered with runners. His complaints fell on deaf ears — but his shotgun didn't.

"He came out waving it at the runners!" Gadway said, laughing. "No one was hurt or anything, it was silly. We haven't had the race run through there since."