

**The Morgan Hill Times**

## **Run and smell the wildflowers Sunday**

Special to The Times

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*The Finish Line* by Angela Young

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Presented by AAUW, the Wildflower Run is a Morgan Hill tradition.

Photo by David Fritts

Now that spring is finally here with the posies in bloom, it's time again to lace up those running shoes and dash outside and join the hordes racing down the Morgan Hill streets Sunday in the American Association of University Women Wildflower Run.

The 28th annual footraces are a Morgan Hill tradition, which is one of my favorites on my calendar I don't dare to miss, as a race T-shirt junkie.

"Each year we have an original design done for the T-shirt and all logo material like registration forms, postcards, posters," former race director Barbara Palmer said.

"The Wildflower Run has been tailored to be a wonderful event held in a small town amidst the spring wildflowers. During the first few years of the run members actually went out to sow wildflower seeds along the route so the runners could enjoy them along the way!"

The event is funded by business sponsors and by individual member donations. The money goes to scholarships for girls in school and is tax-deductible. One notable sponsor is Jamba Juice, owned by Brian and Katie Howard. They provide all registered runners with a complimentary smoothie after the run.

I admit I do the run for the delicious Jamba strawberry drink at the end.

Most of the volunteers and workers are from AAUW. "I have volunteered at the WFR every year since I moved to Morgan Hill in 1999 except for one year when I was out of town," Carol O'Hare said. "All branch members are encouraged to help in some way, either the day of the race or ahead of time. This year, since we're now using electronic chip timing provided by South Valley Endurance, I will help with registration in addition to publicity."

This year's race director, Yvonne Duckett, said: "We'd like to see over 1,000 runners and walkers come out and enjoy a run through beautiful scenic Morgan Hill. Last year we had over 900 participants in our 2K Kids Run, 5K Run/Walk and 10K Run.

"I personally enjoy running," Duckett added. "We have infants in strollers, pushed by their energetic parents. ... Running my heart out, I have been passed by infants. It is a humbling experience. We have runners over 75 who astound me with their



vitality. My husband was thrilled to run next to Mayor Steve Tate in last year's run. We have a Wildflower Walk this year because of Inga Alonzo."

Walker Alonzo explained, "I have a lot of coworkers and friends who prefer walking to running also and know the benefits of walking are different from those of running. Running is great for cardiovascular health and walking is a better fat-calorie burning workout for those trying to maintain or lose weight. Then there are all of those thousand of overweight Americans who are encouraged to start with walking to begin weight loss. ... I think the Walk category helps encourage more newcomers each year to not feel intimidated by the Run category."

Putting on a race isn't easy. Palmer shared about some of them.

"We use flexibility and problem-solving to get through the many challenges of the run. We have coped with pouring rain, scorching heat, construction on run routes, and most notably a man with a shotgun who was not happy that the run was going past his house!"

The hard-working AAUW ladies don't let anything deter them from putting on a hometown treat for all ages. Joe LoBianco wrote to organizers, asking to add an 80-age division.

"I am 83 years old and am interested in participating in the 5K Wildflower Run on April 10. Have noted the 5K run division awards state the last category as 70 plus. I participated in over 20 races in 2010 and 7 races so far this year and all but one have had award divisions of 80 and over. It is difficult for us octogenarians to compete with those 70 year olds. Besides, more and more of us oldies are participating these days and it is nice to compete with our peers."

# Taking part in another big turnout

Hundreds from Italy to Ethiopia toed the line Sunday at Live Oak High School for the 28th annual Wildflower Run presented by the American Association of University Women.

Despite the chilly weather, 755 stalwarts ran or walked for the red tees, finisher medals and Jamba Juice smoothies and, of course, set personal records.

The children's 2k winners were Cole Davis and Natalie Mazaud, although the race wasn't timed officially.

Fifty Wolfpak members showed up in their sleek black uniforms among the 705

other contestants prepped and ready to blast out of the gates. From little kids to senior citizens, these guys always show up at every Wildflower event. They were also among the winners in Sunday.

Kyle Deisenroth blazed the trail in the 5K with 17 minutes, 26 seconds, followed by Ryan Corvese in 17:34. Cody Hulme snagged third place in 18:06.

Morgan Hill's Michael Hulme also ran the 5K with his son, Cody. He finished in an impressive 20:23.



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Racers bolt from the start line Sunday at Live Oak High School in the 10K, part of the 28th annual Wildflower Run presented by the American Association of University Women.

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"This is a great race because there are lot of people we see at the start and finish. This is my second wildflower," Hulme said.

In the ladies division, Erin Logan sprinted to the finish in 20:49 with Julie Wolfsmith on her heels in 21:02 and Akane Hashimoto rounding it up with 21:57.

These winners gave me a peek into how they prepared for the race.

"We cross-train, so we swam, bike and run to prepare for our runs," said Wolfsmith, who leads the Wolfpak team with her husband, Dave. "We all had goal times that we went over yesterday. We all had our paces and went for it. I think everyone is happy with their race."



**BARBARA BRAZELTON** • SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

Kids take off in the 2K Wildflower race on Sunday at Live Oak High School's Richert Field.

Erin Logan said, "I felt great. I felt strong. We all trained together as a team. We encouraged and supported each other and ran together. We train seven days a week."

Hashimoto is a Japanese exchange student at Sobrato High School; she is also part of the Wolfpakers.

"It was fun, I like run-

ning. Keeping the pace was hard," she said.

"We all had aggressive goals. It was hard for all of us at all levels," Wolfsmith added. "We do this to keep a healthy lifestyle."

"We keep a fast pace consistently, the whole race you're feeling it," Logan added.

San Jose's Jimmy

Baraona came with his mom, Kathie. They enjoyed the 3.1-mile run.

"I could've run better had I practice running a lot more before the race," Baraona said, regarding his finish time of 28:15.

I ran with them, seeing if I would be the first to make it to the Jamba Juice tent afterwards. Whoever

lost had to pay for a delicious Strawberry smoothie for everyone. Baraona's mom beat me by crossing the finish line at 33.14 and I trailed behind in 33.44. Good thing the smoothies were free.

Fred Deisenroth, who completed the 10K in 42:20, and his son, Derek, competed in the 10K. They are part of the Wolfpak triathlon team. Unfortunately, due to a goof up with the lead cyclist making a wrong turn on the 10K course, the leaders of the pack were disqualified, and their times weren't recorded. This included the elite runner Tegenu Beru and the younger Deisenroth. They get a comp entry for next year's run.

Derek Deisenroth said, "I probably PR'd today but went the wrong way because the front few people in the 10K went the wrong way. I followed my teammate who was in front of me. It was a

shorter race."

"I think he had a PR at the 5K point and he was excited to see if he was going to PR on his 10K time. So it's kind of a bummer that the course changed," Derek's father said.

Marathoner Gar Chan from Gilroy ran the 10K (46:13) and he wasn't affected by the mishap on the course.

"My strategy was to finish and not fall flat on my race," he joked. "It was a good training goal to reach my time. This is a great run, the organization is fantastic, and people are very friendly. It's a fantastic race as usual and I wish everyone can run it."

Angela Young is a free lance journalist for South Valley Newspapers and is passionate about the running world. She's been a runner for over a decade and loves to write stories on seasoned athletes, weekend warriors, newbies, races of all distances on paved roads and off the beaten path. She likes to include the wild and crazy as well as the most serene in her stories. Send her an e-mail at [angela@thefathersart.com](mailto:angela@thefathersart.com).