

Thirtieth Annual Morgan Hill Classic *Wildflower Run*



WILDFLOWER RUN PHOTOS BY ANGELA YOUNG

By Angela Young
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Every spring the ladies of Morgan Hill's **American Association of University Women (AAUW)** put on a fun athletic event for runners and walkers. **The Wildflower Run** is synonymous with the family-friendly town of Morgan Hill. The kids' 2K, the 5K and 10K are part of the race, which gives everyone a chance to pick their favorite distance.

Although serious contenders in the 5K and 10K races vying for top prizes are at the event, WFR caters to all levels of fitness. There isn't a hint of snobbery among the race organizers, the volunteers or participants toward newbies.

You can have elites and the weekend warrior toe the line in a relaxed, fun atmosphere.

Wildflower Run 2013 (WFR) has a new feature according to **Barbara Palmer**, who is ubiquitous with the race. Palmer says, "The big news for the run this year is that we are inaugurating a 5k stroller category for moms with little ones. Babies will get their very own shirt that says 'Wildflower Stroller.'"

Another cool element this year is the t-shirt contest. **Carol O'Hare**, sponsor committee co-chair explains, "To celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the Wildflower Run, runners are encouraged

to wear tee shirts from past runs that they have participated in. To check out dates of shirts, go to www.aauw-morganhill.org/files/wfr_shirts.pdf. A prize will be awarded to whoever wears the oldest WFR Run t-shirt."

Speaking of WFR history, let's jump back in time with Palmer and O'Hare. Palmer shares, "I have been with the run since its



30th Annual Wildflower Run 2K/5K/10K

Sunday, April 14, 2013

at Live Oak High
1505 East Main Avenue,
Morgan Hill, CA 95037

Presented by Morgan Hill's AAUW
<http://wildflowerrun.org>
Contact Wendy Bell: Registration Chair
Wendyrbell@charter.net
408-778-3924

You can register online at Racemine.
www.racemine.com/AAUW-Morgan-Hill-CA-Branch/events/2013/30th-Annual-Wildflower-Run-2k-5k-10k/register



beginning thirty years ago. I was with **Marilyn Gadway** when she came up with the idea. We were attending an AAUW convention."

O'Hare recalls, "It was first presented in 1984, just a year after the branch was chartered, for the express purpose of raising funds to support education for women. The first race was for women only, and the organizers were surprised by the large turnout of more than 200 runners."

She then adds, "**Elena Moreno**, long-time branch member, recalls that when Marilyn Gadway, who came up with the idea of the Wildflower Run, first began talking about a run, Elena had no idea what she was talking about. Elena says that the only 'run' she knew about, was a run in a stocking. Elena is now 91 years old and still supports the Wildflower Run."

For roughly three decades WFR expanded in size, changed venues, added several distances, plus a new t-shirt design every year. Their purpose

remains the same: To raise funds to support

education for women and girls who are planning to seek higher education. They hope to raise \$30,000 this year (\$1,000 per year the run has been around).

Race director **Elizabeth Mandel** is proud of her staff. "I have a wonderful team, with different people responsible for different aspects of the run (medals, publicity, sponsors, water stops, signs, course marshals, course setup, registration, MC, hospitality, expo area...) My job is to make sure they are coordinating all the aspects of their areas of responsibility so that, come race day, everything runs flawlessly."

Wendy Bell is in charge registration. She says, "I'm hoping we reach 1000 runners/walkers this year." Bell reflects on the inspiring story of one family who signed up. "I would get registrations from families with 7 or 8-year olds that had signed up for the 5K. I would call

them to see if they wanted to do the 2K. One Dad said, 'Oh no. He wants to run with us and is practicing every weekend to do the 5K with us.' I think that is so awesome!!"



- Angela Young is a Morgan Hill freelance writer who enjoys composing stories that are engaging and compelling for all readers. Young's diverse background in the entertainment, fine art and sports industries along with her journalism training empowers

her to interview celebrities to the unknown hero. Every person has a unique story to share with the world. Young firmly believes in making that possible through her work. When she is not writing, Young is running, dancing Zumba or biking with her husband Ken on their travels. She also likes to create colorful illustrations and paintings in her studio.