

Annual Wildflower Run blossoms with happy little feet

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Gracie and Emily

Gale Hammond's granddaughters, Gracie and Emily, participated in-and completed-the AAUW Wildflower Run in Morgan Hill.

The annual Wildflower Run in Morgan Hill rocks! The event, which embraces a trifecta of healthy fun, is an enjoyable event for the whole family and raises financial proceeds benefiting education for girls and women has coolness down cold.

Earlier this month Morgan Hill's American Association of University Women (AAUW) presented its 31st annual Wildflower Run. The event is so popular I would wager that even if you've only lived in South County a little while, you're assured to see someone there you know. For example, my good friend, Linda Tarvin, has volunteered at the event for years, and with her perpetually happy smile, fun hats and sun-shiny attitude, I know she is a favorite with runners and bystanders alike.

Several years ago, with zero training, I decided to enter the Wildflower Run along with one of my gal pals. Needless to say, we accomplished more chit chat than actual distance that day. But my seemingly foolhardy decision to run actually had an objective.

It was at this particular time I apparently decided to have a mid-life crisis, so I returned to college with the objective of beginning a new career in photojournalism. Just up the road at San Jose State University, I was having the time of my mid-life crisis cavorting with 20-somethings and several professors who were-yikes!-years younger than me.

Since I needed to complete a "picture story" for an upcoming assignment, I signed up for the Wildflower Run. How awesome my picture story would be: Drama. Endurance. Victory. Defeat. Perfect, right?

Now let me just say serious athletes do not run races while toting big camera equipment. Zoom lenses that outweigh your firstborn are a definite impediment to going the distance. Not to mention stumbling over my own feet at the get-go. Instead of the tight shot I'd envisioned of racers blasting off from the starting line, what I got was a slightly cock-eyed, blurred image of somebody's running shoe that barely made it into the frame.

I do want to assure you that I managed to stay on my feet. No embarrassing face down, spread-eagle "splat" on the track for this girl. I kept my dignity completely intact. Yay, me.

Well, the photo assignment didn't turn out to be my greatest collegiate achievement, although my professor generously commented on the "artful" nature of the shot of somebody's running shoe that barely made it into the frame.

So this spring when my daughter and son-in-law signed up my two granddaughters for the 2K Run for Kids 10 and Under category of the Wildflower Run, I was excited. They were picking up the torch, carrying on "Mimi's" tradition of Wildflower Run excellence. Well, OK, that's probably overstating the case. But, unlike me, I was sure my girls would actually finish the race.

One of the great things about the Wildflower Run is that anybody can participate. You'll find young kids, babies in strollers, pregnant women, old folks, young folks and everybody in between. It's a gorgeous route for the older runners along beautiful backroads with vistas of our vibrantly green rolling hills while kids in my granddaughters' category run along a safe school track to complete their race.

And how did my girls do? Did they, unlike their Mimi weighted down by camera equipment a dozen years ago, actually finish their run? You bet they did.

"Mimi, Mimi!" squealed Emily who just turned 5 years old. "I won a trophy!" What? An actual trophy? OK, she meant a "medal" because she and her sister, Gracie, who is almost 7, both finished the race. Soon I was online ordering their "action shot" photos because, well, who can resist two little girls going for their personal best?

And about next year ... if I start training right NOW, this minute, maybe I'll give that Wildflower Run another whirl-minus the camera equipment. I'm envisioning a family thing here. Three generations of runners. Is it doable?

Well, there's a saying I love: "What would you attempt if you knew you could not fail?" Yep, a finish in the Wildflower Run might be possible after all.

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2014 AAUW Wildflower Run

Jim McDonald/Special to the Times

http://www.morganhilltimes.com/multimedia/aauw-wildflower-run/collection_c7f0854e-c6a4-11e3-a23b-0017a43b2370.html?mode=nogs



Bev Locsin, Tracey Ulery, Miranda Galloway and Cecile Boyd prepare to cross the finish line together in the 5K walk during the AAUW Wildflower Run Sunday at Live Oak High School.



Walker Napoli is the first to cross the finish line in the children's 2k run during the AAUW Wildflower Run Sunday at Live Oak High School.



Craig Lore, first place winner of the 5k run in the 60 to 69-year-old category, shakes hands with second place winner Leonard Itkin during the AAUW Wildflower Run Sunday at Live Oak High School.



Inka Curran, from Morgan Hill , crosses with her son Samuel in the stroller in the 5K stroller race, as Alex Thoryk excitedly crosses the finish for the 5K race, during the AAUW Wildflower Run Sunday at Live Oak High School.



Tiffany Hall, from Mountain View, flashes a quick smile after taking 3rd place and the first woman to cross the line for the 5K race during the AAUW Wildflower Run Sunday at Live Oak High School.



Runners leave the starting line of the 5K race during the AAUW Wildflower Run Sunday at Live Oak High School.



Walker and Hudson Napoli celebrate their first and second place finishes respectively, with their parents after the children's 2k run during the AAUW Wildflower Run Sunday at Live Oak High School.



Children wait for the start of the 2K race during the AAUW Wildflower Run Sunday at Live Oak High School.



Lisa Saucedo cheers on her son Aaron, 5, as they cross the line in the 5K race during the AAUW Wildflower Run Sunday at Live Oak High School.