

# Wildflower Run helps local girls, women to grow

**Last year's AAUW raised more than \$50,000**

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More than 1,000 runners of all ages will participate Sunday April 3 in Morgan Hill's annual Wildflower Run. Last year's run, organized by the local branch of the American Association of University Women, produced more than \$50,000 to support educational opportunities for women and girls.

For 33 years, enthusiastic community support of the run has allowed the AAUW to return to the community an increasingly wide array of scholarships and grants. Generous local business sponsorships, individual member donations and run registrations meant that in 2015, the local AAUW allocated a record \$50,000 in support of its mission of "advancing equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research."

For many years the AAUW has provided scholarships to Morgan Hill Unified School District high school girls and women re-entering college after a gap in their education. The branch also funds MHUSD middle school girls to attend Tech Trek, a summer STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) camp at Stanford University. Space in the camp is coveted and Tech Trekkers speak glowingly of the camp and the opportunities to which they have been exposed:

Julia Leal, former camper and Live Oak High School senior, will be attending Stanford University in the fall, majoring in Earth Systems. She will be the first member of her family to attend college. Julia credits Tech Trek with changing her life.

"I didn't know anything about college," she said. "Stepping onto the Stanford campus and learning about the possibilities inherent in STEM careers inspired me to return. My initial interest in math evolved into a passion for environmental science, and I subsequently applied for and received a summer internship at Stanford in Soil Science and Sustainable Agriculture."

Another STEM program we offer, unique to Morgan Hill and open to all MHUSD middle and high school girls, is GEMS (Girls Engaged in Math and Science), a monthly after-school program.

As the financial success of the run has grown, AAUW has added other types of scholarships and grants. We now provide past scholarship winners with additional annual grants, sponsor a college student from Morgan Hill to attend the National Conference for College Women Student Leaders, run a local speech contest for high school students, sponsor branch member participation in Leadership Morgan Hill, and have just introduced an annual scholarship for a Gavilan Community College nursing student. Another new offering is Community Action Grants to local non-profit organizations for specific programs consistent with AAUW's mission. This year's grant recipients included Community Solutions, the Learning and Loving Education Center, the Friends of the Morgan Hill Library's Gift of Reading program and Discovery Counseling Center.

As part of a national organization, AAUW-MH designates part of its profits to underwrite national AAUW priorities including employment discrimination lawsuits and graduate fellowships. The Morgan Hill Wildflower Run Research and Projects Grant Endowment, when completed, will fund more community action and career development grants.

We pride ourselves on a fun, well-managed race with something for everyone, ranging from a Kids' 2K Fun Run, to a USATF certified 10K run, to a choice of 5K- run or walk or a baby stroller category (with T-shirts for the tots).

New this year is a Senior (60+) 2K walk or run, supported by the Centennial Recreation Senior Center to encourage an active lifestyle.

To register or make a donation, go to <http://WildflowerRun.org>. To learn more about AAUW-MH and AAUW's 135-year battle to improve the lives of American women and girls, visit [www.aauw-morganhill.org](http://www.aauw-morganhill.org).

*Elizabeth Mandel is the Wildflower Run co-director.*

## **DETAILS**

**What: Wildflower Run**

**When: Sunday, April 3**

**Where: LOHS, 1505 E. Main Ave.**

**Tickets: [www.wildflowerrun.org](http://www.wildflowerrun.org)**