

Wildflower Run adapts to pandemic

Registration open for virtual event

BY ELIZABETH MANDEL

Non-profit organizations have been forced by the pandemic to re-imagine their fundraising efforts, finding creative and compelling ways to continue helping those in need in their community. AAUW Morgan Hill, organizer of the annual Wildflower Run for almost 40 years, has embraced this challenge and will present an all-volunteer virtual run, March 20-28, enabling them to continue offering scholarships and grants in support of equity for women and girls.

Virtual runs offer the flexibility of running or walking with no pressure. Participants in the 38th Annual Wildflower Run can select a 2K, 5K or 10K distance, and choose Walk, Run or Stroller events—at any location or time between March 20 and 28. They will receive the usual swag—a limited edition 2021 T-shirt, adorable bonus baby-tees for tots in stroller events, and coordinated medals for youth (12 and under).

Many of Morgan Hill's Wildflower Run participants enjoy the opportunity to run together at a friendly, local community event. Since that can't happen this year, we are offering new and unique incentives:

- All participants have numerous opportunities to win great prizes in many categories of entries through prize drawings—from pre-race training to running in costume or with pets. Visit WildflowerRun.org/prizes for specifics.
- Participants can join a virtual team, and connect with far-flung friends and family, training and running together. Team members will have bonus opportunities to win prizes.

While many other companies promote virtual runs and present themselves as charitable, just a portion of their proceeds are optionally directed to charity. What makes the AAUW Morgan Hill's Wildflower Run—virtual or not—truly stand out, is that we are an all-volunteer-run event, allowing us to direct 100 percent of proceeds to support community grants, local scholarships and leadership programs for women and girls. Over the years, we have allocated an impressive \$600,000 toward our causes. We are especially committed to students' educational success; we provide scholarships for students with financial need as they graduate from high school and continue through to college graduation. (Learn more at aauwmh.org/local-scholarships.) In this pandemic, these students' needs are even more urgent; studies show that over half of socioeconomically disadvantaged college students believe the pandemic will impact their ability to graduate.



VIRTUAL RUN AAUW Morgan Hill encourages runners to participate in the annual Wildflower Run at any time or location between March 20-28.

Funds to support all these activities are raised through runner registrations, individual donations and corporate sponsorships. Amy Whelan, Sponsors Co-Chair, appreciates the continued loyalty and commitment of local businesses.

"Companies that have supported AAUW for years, and even new sponsors, are generously showing how much they care, how important scholarships are, and their confidence that AAUW delivers on its local grants and programs year after year," Whelan said. "AAUW is grateful for this support that we'll be able to pass on to Morgan Hill's students."

Come run with us! Enter fun drawings for great prizes, and support your community. Register now, become a sponsor, or donate at WildflowerRun.org.

Elizabeth Mandel is the AAUW Morgan Hill Wildflower Run Publicity Chair.