

## **AAUW's Wildflower Run raises funds to promote education**

By Elizabeth Mandel, AAUW Wildflower Run Publicity Chair

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Morgan Hill Life file photo/Susan Brazelton

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The AAUW Morgan Hill's annual Wildflower Run has been a local tradition for almost 40 years. This year we have embraced the challenge of fundraising during a pandemic by presenting an all-volunteer virtual run, March 20-28, enabling us to continue offering local scholarships and grants in support of equity for women and girls

While many other groups offer virtual runs and present themselves as charitable, just a portion of their proceeds are optionally directed to charity. What makes the 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. During the years, we have allocated \$600,000 toward our causes.

We are especially committed to students' educational success, providing scholarships for women with financial need as they graduate from high school and through college completion. Donna Dicker, the scholarship coordinator, observes: "During this pandemic, these students' needs are even more urgent; studies show that more than half of socio-economically disadvantaged college students believe the pandemic will impact their ability to graduate." She also encourages South Valley residents to tell local college students — including women who are returning to college after a break in their education — to learn more and apply for a wide range of scholarships now at [aauwmh.org/local-scholarships](http://aauwmh.org/local-scholarships).

Through Wildflower Run proceeds we also fund Young Women Leaders (mentorship and leadership development of local high school girls), Community Action Grants (for local non-profit organizations), and Tech Trek, a summer STEM camp at Stanford University for MHUSD middle school girls. Abbey Pfefferlen, a former Tech Trek camper and now a veterinary student at University of California, Davis says, "AAUW Morgan Hill has shaped my path and helped me realize the possibilities for women in science." Learn more about all AAUW does for the community at [aauwmh.org](http://aauwmh.org).

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 (age 12 and younger).

Usually, participants look forward to running or walking together at a friendly, local event. Since that can't happen this year, we are offering new and unique incentives:

- Numerous opportunities for all participants to win from more than 50 great prizes in many categories of entries through prize drawings — from pre-race challenges to running in costume or with pets. Learn more at [www.WildflowerRun.org/prizes](http://www.WildflowerRun.org/prizes).
- Participants can form a virtual team, perhaps connecting with far-flung friends and family, training and running together. Team members will have bonus opportunities to win prizes.

Funds for our causes 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, AAUW is grateful for this support that we'll be able to pass on to Morgan Hill's students."

Come run with us! Register now, at [www.WildflowerRun.org](http://www.WildflowerRun.org).