

MARATHON MANIA By Greg Woodman

Austin's Marathon 2/18/07—began on the Congress Ave. bridge over Town Lake with 12,000 athletes huddled together closely, just hoping to keep warm. 6:30am temps were unseasonably cool in the low 40's (without the wind chill) and the sun was barely above the horizon for a 7am start—the warming rays soon engulfing the Texas State Capital's dome that set our backdrop.

Folks were fairly well split between the half- and the full-marathon. The new course posed some substantial hilly challenges too with elevation gains of up to 300 feet. Personally, I had trained very well and was confidently on my way to a PB; that is, until I was sidelined by a very painful IT Band injury. And for some of the others hoping to enter the half but instead running the full 26, (the half sold-out its capacity of 6,000) the pain of the extra distance took its toll on them. I was all too happy just to have some company to walk with as I limped across the finish line 1-hour behind my expected finish time. I happily received my 26.2 mile finisher's medal and full-marathon jersey like everyone else that had raced, walked or stumbled through it all.

The city and its people were great and with nearby San Antonio offering us its fabulous river-walk, the trip was something my wife and I gobbled up in the week before the race. From BBQ along a Texas road-side to The Alamo and Jazz dinners on the famous river-walk to Cajun on Austin's 6th Street downtown night-life area, our trip to this part of the country left us ready to go back next year and do it all over again!

"Running the Race"

By Kinder Holdaway

I remember what it was like, walking into a familiar store some years ago. I unloaded my little girl with special needs into her stroller. Unable to walk or move, she waited patiently for me to gather my things and lock up the car. As we entered the automatic doors, we were greeted by a very familiar face. No, not a family member or close friend, but an older business man. His face beamed when their eyes connected, and he knew she was excited to be out of the house. For the first time ever someone had approached us and he said, "May I?" I stepped aside and he quickly grabbed the handles of the stroller and whisked her away. Up and down the store aisles they went, stopping to ponder everything that caught her eye. She was clearly excited for the shopping, and really enjoyed someone new taking an interest. Their conversations could be heard by anyone nearby. Nothing was planned or intentional, but rather a willing heart sacrificed 30 minutes of his time to make a difference. None of us expected that to happen that day, but the three of us were changed.

On March 31st, at Haller Park in Arlington, a most amazing thing happened. For the first time in our community, the Arlington Runners Club partnered with Eagle Wings disAbility Ministries and volunteers from Smokey Point Comm. Church to host an event that will not soon be forgotten. We had over 160 participants and 300 in attendance. I know that many who were



"May the road rise up to meet you,
May the wind be ever at your back,
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
and the rain fall softly on your fields,
and until we meet again,
May God hold you in the hollow of
his hand..."

I love this little blessing so much; in fact, I shared it at the start of our last race and I wanted to share it again because it just seems to fit so well. I mean, think about the circumstances we face each time we go for a run-- the "road", the "wind", the "sun" and the "rain". I'm so thankful there is someone watching out for us!

- Greg

2007 ARC Races

Gleneagle Community Run

5k/10k - Sat. June 9, 10am

Airport Run for Hope

5k/10k - Sat. Aug. 11, 9am

River and Rails Run

5k/10k - Sat. Sept. 29, 9am

Marines Toys for Tots Run

5k/10k - Sat. Dec. 15, Noon

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Club Mission Statement

ARC is a non-profit group that exists to provide runners/walkers of all abilities a free forum to meet for the purpose of achieving personal fitness goals through charitable race events.

there that day, came with their own intentions on running a good race, and helping raise funds for Eagle Wings at the same time. What could be better than exploring God's beauty and creation on a sunny day in Washington? Well, let me tell you.

As the race time began, many runners noticed that there were a number of participants invited by Eagle Wings who were clearly not there for their best race time. They were out because someone had taken the time to invite them. Some came with a caregiver or their parents, and others came by bus. Enthusiasm came from those with wheelchairs, walkers, and especially those with developmental disabilities. Everyone was excited to run. As I had experienced with my own daughter, I saw people sacrificing their own agenda, and putting others first. I saw people welcoming unfamiliar faces, taking time to be friendly, and grabbing the handles of the wheelchairs. Everyone who wanted to enter the race had a friend. Everyone who got up early, got their work out (just by getting dressed), and made it to the bus was able to enter the race. For some it was all they could do to wait anxiously at the start line, walk ten steps beyond the line, turn around and finish. They were applauded and cheered as if they had just run a 10K. Others actually made it to the first street crossing and then turned around and came back. It was clearly a major accomplishment.

I have received calls and letters from participants, so excited that they were included in a race. Caregivers and parents were so glad to see their clients taking an interest in a physical activity. Even a mother discovered for the first time that her son was great at running, but had never been provided a forum or a buddy to run with.

So many wonderful things happened that day. We gave away a wheelchair van to a family in need, handed out trophies and ribbons, and raised a net \$3,500 for a wonderful organization, but if you thought that was all, you may have missed something so much bigger.

We are all involved in a race. Sharing our faith and friendship alongside individuals who are marginalized and forgotten make their journey so much sweeter, but we are the ones changed. When we recognize our own weaknesses and draw on God's strength, the difficulty of reaching our own goal dissipates. When we engage and offer hope to others who don't have the resources or ability, we have come alongside them and offered unconditional love and acceptance. Many times we believe we are the ones extending love and coming to the aid of someone who needs us, but we quickly discover that we are the one in need.

Thank you Arlington Runners Club for providing an avenue and opportunity to reach out to our community to embrace and honor and support the people we serve. Surely you have been the hands and heart that Jesus would extend today.

www.eaglewingsministries.org

A TULIP RUN RACER'S FEEDBACK By Pat Phares

Here is my experience at this years Tulip Run. When I left the house and on the way to the run the weather was a little cold and light showers were falling. By the time I arrived however the rain had stopped and by the start of the race the sun started peeking out behind the clouds. A very nice day for a run! The Tulip Run offers a 2 and 5 mile walk or run. The course is mainly gravel trails through the woods at the Skagit County Airport. I really like the trails and running through the woods. This was my 4th time at this event and I was hoping for a good time. My training was going really well and running with the club on Sat. mornings made me feel like I was well prepared for the 5 miler. Throughout the race I felt really good and my splits were just about where I wanted them. I ended up with my best time by 43 sec. in the Tulip Run and my second fastest 5 miler. I would recommend this race very highly. Very well organized and great snacks after the race. Then after the race you can go check out the tulip fields.

