

Centerfold Newsletter of the Kansas City Express



President's Message By June Moore President of the Kansas City Express

On behalf of KC Express I want to thank Cathy Casto for her leadership this past year during which she has been an inspiration in her dedication to both KC Express and running. As president she scheduled a number of informative speakers and even participated in our Top Chef competition in November, serving a wonderful asparagus salad. Cathy continues to add new marathon runs to her record and is a support to aspiring runners along the road.

On a personal note, I appreciate Cathy's guidance, patience and support as she helped me prepare to take on the role of president for 2010. Thanks!



June Moore and her dog Sadie

Happiness Is...

It seems everywhere I look these days I see articles and research on the role of friendships in happiness, optimism, positive emotions and physical health.

In recent years researchers have paid increased attention to what helps humans feel happy and much of the evidence points to the power of human connectedness. The developer of Positive Psychology, *Martin Seligman, PhD*, has written that based on his research, engagement with friends and family, and involvement with avocational pursuits are components of authentic happiness (the others being pleasure and a sense of purpose).

Not only do we receive an emotional boost from friendships, but friends help us to achieve physical goals which would be much more challenging alone. Many times I've reflected after a ten mile walk that I would not have completed this distance without my Saturday "walking buddies".

But the greatest gift of being a member of KC Express has been the friendship, laughter, support and caring I receive in regular doses. I asked a few KC Express members to share some of their thoughts on the "human connectedness" aspect of being a member, and here is some of what they shared:

Jessica Walsh states that her running group "has been a constant in my life" which has been especially important in the last year when she went through a period of unemployment. She explains, "I could always count on friends who were there to lift me up... friends that are not going to judge you... someone that sees the better in you when you're going through

difficult times." Jessica thinks it's important for many of us to remember that "when the financial world is tumbling down around you, it doesn't cost any money to strap on your tennies and run with friends. My friends are not just KC Express friends but friends for life."

Heather Hunter joined KC Express in March, 2009, and after starting with the Saturday walking group, joined the Saturday "penguins" running group. Heather describes her experience this way, "You're nervous the first time you meet and then everyone is so accepting! Everyone in my group is so different yet they are the best friends I've ever had; this one thing in common (running) brings us the closest together." She describes the wonderful support each member receives in meeting her own personal goals for fitness.

Subashini Nadarajah, a member of the Saturday walking group, spoke of the "wisdom" shared by older group members in their healthy approach to life as well as the wit and intelligence of members. "It's like having older sisters." Suba, as well as many other members, describe how they miss friends when unable to walk or run.

As you can hear in the above quotes, the happiness of these connections is contagious. The quiet conversations, laughter, unexpected experiences, physical triumphs, emotional support, and knowledge shared truly are the components of authentic happiness and part of being a member of KC Express. Join us in the pursuit of happiness in 2010!

Photos of Friends in Kansas City Express:

Express Friends sharing a meal.
L-R: Carol Cunningham, Emily Davis, Subashini Nadarajah, June Moore, Darlene Burruss and Kathy Hintz.



Friends Kelly Pfannenstiel and Sheri Fox enjoy the Great Santa 5K Run.
Photo: SeeKCrun.com

Carolyn Mitchell 2010 WIN for KC Award Winner



Carolyn Mitchell, center, has been named winner of the UMB Senior Sportswoman Award to be presented at the WIN for KC banquet on February 5, 2010 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. The award is presented to a local woman, age 60 or older, who has demonstrated significant athletic achievement, outstanding leadership qualities and who encourages participation of girls and women in sports and fitness. Carolyn has done 96 marathons, including all 50 states and all 7 continents. She got her start through David Virtue's Big Miles program. Included in the photo are: Aileen McComas on the left and Ann Nelson on the right. Congratulations Carolyn!



A group of Express friends enjoy coffee after a fall Saturday long run.



Corey Wright, The Rehabilitation Institute and Elainia Rogers spoke about adaptive sports at the January Express meeting.

Activities, Training and Meetings

Long Run:

We're on Facebook! Become a friend to the KC Express Long Run Group to contact others in the group, locations for runs, and other bits and pieces. Join the Long-Run Group at 7am Saturdays followed by chat and coffee! Meet locations for each month are listed below. To be on the Saturday Long-Run e-mail list, please contact Saskia Jacobse (saskia7@kc.rr.com).

February Location

Einstein's, Prairie Village, 3939 W. 69th Terrace
Penguins, novice and beginning runners, and non-early birds meet at the same location at 7am for a shorter long-run (4mi) at a gentle pace and join the others at the end for yap and yummys. Please e-mail Stephanie Kong (hexenpluis@yahoo.com) if you are joining the later group so we know to look out for you!

Walking:

Saturdays at 7:30 a.m. For more info, contact jmoore@kumc.edu

Monthly Meeting:

- 2/2/10 KC Express Meeting Speaker: Ashton Copp, American Heart Association Volunteer speaking for Women's Heart Health Month.
- 3/02/10 KC Express Meeting: Sabrena Lea, Girls on the Run of Jackson County Council Director.

Location: St. Joseph Medical Center, Community Center, Building D
I-435 & Stateline Road, KCMO
6:30 p.m.: Social time with light snack
7:00 p.m.: Meeting begins

Red Dress Run:

Save the date and check the thrift shops! Our 3rd annual Red Dress Run will be Feb 10, as part of the KC Track Club's weekly Wednesday Night Runs. (These are always good times, a good runs, & a good potluck dinners). When we host near Valentine's Day, we encourage all to wear a red dress, the symbol of women's heart health, over running clothes. Many of the guys last year had memorable outfits!

More information

www.kcexpress.org

2010 Officers and Committees

Officers:

June Moore, President
Kelly Pfannenstiel, President-elect
Gwen Rico, Secretary
Melissa Stringer, Treasurer



Committees:

Belinda Ambrose, 2010 MD5K Race Director
Terry Mann, Publicity
Ginger Snawerdt and Kimberlee Clyma, Membership
Karen Carlin and Heather Hunter, Volunteer Coordinators
Saskia Jacobse, Group Run Coordinator
Carol Cunningham and June Moore, Group Walk Coordinators
Stephanie Kong, Newsletter

A Testimonial to Eladio Valdez From Amie C. Jew, M.D.

Eladio,

I planned to send you a brief thank you note after the Disney marathon. I had no idea what a profound experience this would be. I apologize in advance for the length of this e-mail, but I wanted to share some thoughts with you.

As you know, I am not your typical Runner's Edge participant. I don't run. I've never liked running. I never had any desire to do a marathon and even in my wildest dreams, this was never in my realm of possibilities. Somewhere along the path, Barbara got me pulled into this crazy plan of doing Disney.

For months, I have watched the runners in this group with awe. They truly love to run. More than the people who simply jog for fitness, these people really love the act of running. I have wondered what possesses these people to do the distances they run. Fitness recommendations do not demand these extremes. Simple moderate exercise three times a week is adequate.

Is there something truly addictive about endorphins? Are they crazy or obsessive? Most of them don't seem crazy. Are they sadistic? Are they anorexic? Are they crazed with uber fitness? Or are they running from something?

Barbara and I have trained for the past 5 months for Disney. We followed your training schedule.... Barbara training throughout the week....me, only on Saturdays. As you know, Barbara is a seasoned veteran having completed 5 marathons previously. We felt ready. During the race, Barbara started hurting at 6 miles and began slowing. She looked odd and started behaving strangely....leaning forward....losing memory....calling me by the wrong name. I don't know how she pounded out another 10 miles, but with sheer determination and stubborn grit, she did. Sadly, the time stopping at the First Aid stations....the time stretching at every mile.... bathroom stops....all added up. With her pain, we had slowed to an 18 minute pace. We had lost our 20 minute lead on the field and found ourselves at the back of the pack.

Most of your runners will never know the feeling of being at the back of a pack. Unless you've been part of the organizing team for race management, you have never known this. Disney requires a 16 minute pace. They had marshals on bikes encouraging participants to pick up the pace....and had a pacer carrying a balloon. In a kind but very deliberate approach, they encouraged everyone to pick up their pace and stay with the pacer or they would be pulled off the course. At the back of the pack, this posse included a team of 5-6 marshals and 6 medics on bicycles. The image was at once terrifying and humiliating. Everything you've trained for seemed moments from collapsing in a surreal nightmare.

Barbara and I had lost our 20 minute lead and found ourselves at the back of the pack. She decided to stop before being pulled off the course. We had discussed this before the race....but I never really believed there was any reason why we would not be able to keep up our 15 minute pace. I never thought there would be a reason why Barbara and I would not finish together. I witnessed her "hitting the wall" and was helpless. We found ourselves publicly yelling at each other....me, telling Barbara we were just going to stop. Barbara pleading with me to go on without her. Me,



Amie Jew and Barbara Hise

refusing to leave her behind.

After an eternity of circular arguing, with the medics within 100 yards, I left her with a volunteer. There is something primal about the fear of being pulled off a course....about seeing the marshals 20 yards from you. There is something devastating when you're suddenly faced with the possibility of not accomplishing a goal you've set out to attain. I have never known this, nor did I ever imagine being in this position. At the back of the pack, I began running. I caught up with the balloon pacer and just kept running.

In these last 10 miles, I discovered the mental part of the race. I had never run before. I had never trained without Barbara by my side. I was alone, in a sea of people....all with one goal and one direction. I regretted my decision to leave Barbara and tortured myself over and over again. I worried desperately about her condition. I found myself in a race without my training partner....with no purpose. I didn't want to be there but didn't know where else to go. That's when I realized, a marathon is an individual event. As in life, you cross the start line...there are many people along the way....and you hope to finish strong at the finish line. I found that push deep in your soul that allows you to do things you never believed possible. I witnessed people pushing themselves to the limit....testing their boundaries....and I realized, I have witnessed this in my patients. I have witnessed their amazing spirit to dig deep during chemotherapy....and despite all odds, persevere. I have also witnessed patients come to a point where despite their deepest desire; their bodies just won't go further. I have seen the anguish and the despair when their bodies simply give out. And at that point, there is a peace....an acceptance that this is as far as I can push. I am at my limit.

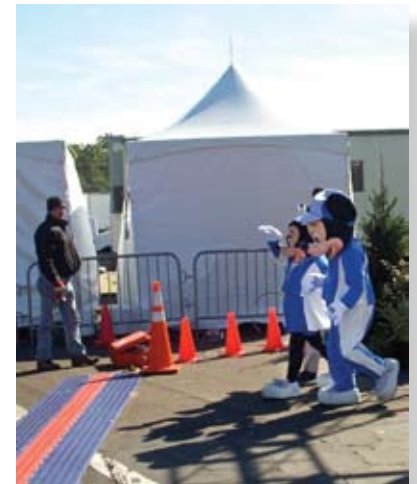
I now understand why runners run. To test their bodies....to see how fast.... how far...they can push themselves. In a marathon, for most, you get to touch those limits in a protected and supported environment and come back safely. It is amazing. It is in the face of this addictive power, that I think true bravery manifests. It took more strength and courage for Barbara to stop.... to recognize her body's limits and not push to the point of injury. Her sheer gut perseverance for 10 miles beyond her body's failing is a testament to her amazing spirit.

And it is through your training that you have taught us to see these limits....and only venture to them safely.

You've trained us well, Eladio. I cannot thank you enough for your care and special consideration for us during this training period...for your encouragement and those comforting eyes...always looking out for us at the end of those long distance sessions. Your team of aid station people were wonderful. They kept their stations up longer for "the walkers at the back" just to make sure we were covered. One kind man even came looking for us in his truck on the 20 mile training before taking down his aid station.... he yelled "Great job! You're ahead of schedule!" I thought of all of these moments during the last 10 miles of this race. I was not alone. And I crossed the finish line without Barbara by my side....in my first and last marathon.....and for you, Coach, I finished 30 minutes ahead of the back of the pack.

I am profoundly grateful.
Amie Jew

Editor's Note: Eladio Valdez is the owner of Runner's Edge training program and works with hundreds of new runners each year.



Minnie and Mickey cross the finish line.