

Mission Statement

The mission of Students Run L.A. is to challenge at-risk secondary students to stay in school and to experience the benefits of goal-setting, character development, adult mentoring and improved health by providing them with a truly life-changing experience: The training for and completion of the Los Angeles Marathon.



Southern California Half Marathon

It's not the distance (13.1 miles) that is the biggest challenge with this run; it's the three weeks of vacation before attempting it! For most of our runners this was the case as we gathered in Irvine to complete our second half marathon distance. At the starting line, the question in our minds was whether we had kept up enough of our training to maintain the fitness level we would need.

(Continued on page 6)

Our New Name: In It For The Long Run

Training 4 times a week...26.2 miles...a healthy lifestyle...high school graduation...going to college. All of these endeavors require the single-minded commitment to achieve greater things over the span of time. It is that new-found dedication that is the goal of Students Run LA and that has inspired our new name for the newsletter: In It For The Long Run. Long the moniker accompanying the SRLA logo, the phrase captures the commitment of our students to accomplishing their goals, as well as our organization's philosophy of commitment to support the students. We want our newsletter to reflect this purpose, so we chose this new name. We hope that you will enjoy our newsletter for the long run.

From the Office

Michelle Rosny Ginny Nikki Phyllis

Greetings from the office of Students Run LA! We welcome the new year with 4,000 students and their volunteer teacher/leaders in training for the Los Angeles Marathon in May 2009. These energetic teens have been training since September, and have completed monthly community races beginning with a 5K in October through two half marathons in December and January. Our focus continues to be to keep these students motivated until the end of May. However, if our previous years of experience have taught us anything, it is that our students will rise to the occasion and achieve profoundly difficult goals.

Marsha Charney, our founding Executive Director, writes elsewhere in the newsletter about her retirement from SRLA. For twenty years Marsha has helped to create, guide, and grow SRLA to the outstanding program that it is today. She infused the program with respect and gratitude for the volunteer teacher/leaders who are the secret (and, in many ways, magic) ingredient that makes SRLA happen. She also kept the program focused on helping the students, balancing the need to hold the students to high standards, while also recognizing that at-risk youth need second chances. We are excited to continue her work, to make SRLA successful for the next twenty years.

Thank you to all of our supporters. You are wonderful! You help us offer a mentoring and marathon-training program to secondary students in Los Angeles. As our alumni tell us, the experience of completing a 26.2-mile marathon is a source of pride and inspiration to them for many years afterwards.

Since our last newsletter, the following organizations have made donations to Students Run L.A.:

- **Albert and Elaine Borchard Foundation**
- **Associated Administrators of Los Angeles**
- **Flora L. Thornton Foundation**
- **Milken Family Foundation**
- **Ralph L. Smith Foundation**
- **Rebecca and Richard Lewis**
- **Simon-Strauss Foundation**
- **Sterling Foundation**
- **Valero**

Thank you to all of our funders who enable us to provide Students Run L.A. to the young people in the Los Angeles area. ❖



From The Coordinators

Paul & Eric

There is only one reason why we have so many dedicated teens progressing toward a significant accomplishment...you, our Marathon Leaders. It is your dedication and belief in these students that keeps them showing up.

In this the year of the extended season, your students are counting on you to keep the goal of finishing the Los Angeles Marathon alive and vital. We will hear about all the great energy being brought to the Marathon by the new owners. We will see the teasers and stories (some of them ours) on Channel 4. But none of that will make the difference between success and not arriving at the finish line.

The difference will be in how you work with your group. The more encouragement they can get the better, both while running and at school. They need to know you are watching and interested in how things are going. They need to know your high expectations for them; That is, the expectation that they are going to stick with the training and make it to the starting line in late May.

We want to say the same to you. We know how the extended season is much harder on you than our students. For the most part, they're in school anyway, so the "when" doesn't matter all that much. But we know that the extra time means keeping that drive going. We appreciate the gift of time you are giving to them instead of to yourself or family.

We are grateful to be with such dedicated and enthusiastic people. We can never say thank you enough for taking on such an important role in our students' lives. They have no idea what you really do for them.

So when we get thanks from parents and others in the community for having such an amazing program, we say "Thank you, but it is the work and effort of our incredible leaders that makes this program the success that it is." You really do make the sun shine a little brighter each day! ❖

A Message From Marsha Charney

Dear Friends, Colleagues, Staff & Marathon Leaders:

As I contemplated retiring as Executive Director of Students Run LA, I had a considerable amount of time to reflect on what an amazing journey the last twenty years has been for me. So many wonderful people from diverse areas of the city (and country) have contributed to my experiences. In writing this short message it is my desire to acknowledge those whose ideas began this unique program, and those who helped these ideas become reality.

When three young continuation high school teachers (Harry Shabazian, Eric Spears and Paul Trapani) met with Roberta Weintraub and me at the LAUSD Board of Education, we were immediately captivated. Their passion and enthusiasm was contagious. They had just experienced guiding a handful of continuation high school students through the streets of Los Angeles to complete the Los Angeles Marathon. What they discovered along the way was a new means to deliver hope!

Together we set about the process of offering this life-changing experience to all high school students (and eventually to middle school students) in Los Angeles. Dr. Don Bethe of the Department of Kinesiology at California State University Northridge joined with us, along with his daughter Teresa, who designed the first training shirt and suggested the name "Students Run LA". The number of classroom teachers of all disciplines who donated hours every week to train students in their schools grew from thirty-five to several hundred today.

The response to our requests for support, from the very first telephone call, was stunning. Foundations and

corporations, through their directors and program officers, responded immediately and took a chance on a fledgling organization. The health foundations recognized the health benefits to students and provided encouragement and guidance to our very small staff. Support came from the LAUSD and from the City of Los Angeles Marathon. We began to build a cadre of Friends of Students Run LA who provided their financial support. The number of students grew beyond imagination and continues to grow today. For two decades I never tired of telling the story, and of introducing Students Run LA to whomever would listen.

I take this opportunity to thank everyone who has contributed to the success of this exceptional program, both with generosity of spirit and financial support. The foundations and corporations were incredibly responsive to our call. I am especially grateful to those who have served on our Board of Directors over the past 20 years, as well as to a staff who has always been dedicated, to the extreme.

I have been extraordinarily fortunate to have enjoyed the friendship and confidence of so many. I leave feeling confident that Students Run LA will continue to thrive and to change lives as so many SRLA alumni return to their communities to help today's students fulfill their dreams. ❖

With great appreciation,
Marsha Charney
February 2009

Calendar

March	TBD
April 19	Friendship Run
May 25	LA Marathon

SRLA Student Focused Website

Leaders, tell your students that they can access our Students Run LA website specifically designed for them.
www.srlastudents.com

Send us articles and pictures for our newsletter!
Email to nikki@srla.org, or mail to:
SRLA, 6505 Zelzah Ave., Reseda, CA 91335



Thank You, Donors!

You are wonderful! Your generous support of our students is helping them have the experience of a lifetime... the opportunity to complete the Los Angeles Marathon. They have been training faithfully since last September. When they cross the finish line in May, having run 26.2 miles, they will feel an exhilaration and sense of accomplishment that money can't buy. Thank you for supporting their hard work and determination.

Diana Akopyan
Anthony Anderson
Anonymous
Michael Appell
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Patrick O'Neill
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Gladys Vargas
Allan Vogel
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Michael Weber
Bernie and Elaine Weiss
Allyne Winderman
Lewis Winters
Matthew Wyatt
Helen and Humberto Yñiguez



Southern California Half Marathon



The runners lined up for the start of the Southern California Half Marathon.

(Continued from page 3)

Happily, the answer was, yes! Helped along by beautiful weather, our formidable group was in super positive spirits as we started this journey. Runners chatted easily as we moved down the road, trading stories of the vacation or other tidbits. Leaders and students alike greeted each other like long-time friends sharing any information about the course and discussing strategies to assure a positive outcome.

This run provides us with a good taste of what it's like to be a part of the larger running community. This is one run where we aren't the majority, as we had been in our first events. Here we could run next to the many different runners of all ages, professions, and conditions who shared our goal to finish this distance. It was the perfect chance to show our determination to many who have heard of us but have never seen us in action.

(Continued from page 6)

What they saw was impressive. They saw teens who were willing to grit out the tough miles; teens who moved to the sides if walking and said thank you to the volunteers desperately trying to keep the water stations flowing. They also found teens that shared in their growing passion for running and were willing to work hard to be fit.

This run is a special one for SRLA because the proceeds benefit Woodbridge High School. Thus most of the volunteers were students from the high school. That made for a nice connection for all our runners. Having so many youth watching and cheering on our success helped us put in the extra effort needed to have a superior event.

The So Cal ½ is an event that tests our newly acquired skills as runners. Because of the extended vacation time, few of us had really put in the full mileage in preparation. To compensate, we needed to draw upon our mental fortitude to carry us when our legs tired. For many, this was the first time we had to do so, and



Grant High School students stop for a quick photo in front of a First Student bus as they get ready to run the half marathon.

our runners showed they have what it takes. This may have only been a taste of the tough and intense miles still ahead of us, but we can be confident from our performance that we will handle it. ❖



Grant High School students gather near the finish line to celebrate completing 13.1 miles.



Jon Fisher of Madison Middle School waves for the camera during the run.



SRLA Alum Continues To Run Marathons



Alejandra Bonilla has run the Los Angeles Marathon four times. Her first time was with SRLA at South Gate High School in 1998, and more recently she has run the LA Marathon in 2005, 2006 and 2007. "My SRLA experience means so much to me," Alejandra wrote us. "SRLA taught me perseverance and determination--values I hold dear and have applied to all aspects of my life. I learned that with dedication, effort and hard work, I could accomplish my goals."

And what tremendous goals she has attained! She graduated from UCLA in 2003 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Latin American Studies and a minor in Education. She returned to UCLA for a Masters Degree in Education in Counseling in Student Affairs. Now she is working full-time as an admissions counselor in the Office of Undergraduate Admissions at USC, and intends to complete her Doctorate in Education at USC in 2011.

Alejandra states that, over the years, people have always been impressed with the fact that she runs marathons. She remains active because she learned through SRLA, how important exercise is. She especially enjoys seeing the "younger" generations of SRLA running next to her, in their SRLA shirts and hats. "SRLA is an excellent program, and I am very proud to say that I was a part of it!" ❖



SRLA going to Congress?



Emanuel Pleitez, a member of Students Run LA at El Sereno Middle School and Wilson High School, is running for the United States Congress.

President Barack Obama has nominated Congresswoman Hilda Solis to be Secretary of Labor, so Emanuel has joined the race for her seat as the Representative for California's 32nd Congressional District.

But that's not the half of Emanuel's accomplishments. He was President of his class (2001) at Wilson High School, captain of five Varsity sports teams at Wilson and All-State Cross Country Runner. He graduated from Stanford University in 2006, worked as a financial analyst for Goldman, Sachs Co, and was a member of President Obama's Transition Team for the Department of the Treasury. He has interned in the United States Senate, served as a mentor for the Boys Girls Club, and serves on the Hispanic Heritage Foundation as a member of the Foundation's Business Advisory Committee.

AND Emanuel was in SRLA! He started in seventh grade at El Sereno Middle School, where **Mary Jacquez** was his Leader. He credits SRLA with introducing him to running and being a big part of his life. He fondly remembers the Atzlán run at East LA College. During his senior year at Wilson, he completed the LA Marathon and earned an SRLA Scholarship. He is pleased to credit SRLA with helping him be where he is today. ❖



FUNDERS 2008-2009

Thank You to ALL of our FUNDERS!

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Ahmanson Foundation	Los Angeles Police Department – Explorers Program
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NOTE: 94% of all donations go directly to the SRLA program; only 6% is used for management and fundraising.



Photo Gallery

Group Photos



El Sereno Middle School



Hawthorne High School



Odyssey High School



Vista del Mar Middle School



Frisbie Middle School



Birmingham High School



Mt. Gleason Middle School



Camino Nuevo High School



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President of the Board
Munger, Tolles & Olson, LLP

Marsha Charney
Students Run L.A.

Alvaro Cortés
Beyond The Bell

Bruce Corwin
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Costco

Dear SRLA Staff and Leaders,

On behalf of Frank McCourt and our team at the Los Angeles Marathon, I want to extend a warm welcome to the entire SRLA family. Our mission at the Marathon is to harness the transformative power of sport to inspire athletes and connect communities; my colleagues and I can think of no single program that exemplifies that mission more clearly than does yours. The real-world stories of personal success that SRLA has spawned—featuring life lessons about dedication, responsibility, goal setting, and achievement—are inspirational to us all.

We look forward to welcoming you to the starting line in May. Keep on running!

Peter Abraham
Creative Director
Los Angeles Marathon

Join the SRLA Going Green Initiative: Get our E-Newsletter

Join the SRLA Going Green Initiative by signing up to receive our bi-monthly newsletters via email. The advantage is that you can get all the news quickly, with just a click of the mouse, and then you can review the content, or retrieve it and save it for easy reference later. Don't forget the reduced desk clutter and the trees you save! Email info@srla.org to sign up today.

Privacy is our priority.



Providence High School

We'd like to thank the following people for their contributions to this newsletter:

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