



7th Annual Petaluma Footrace – by Holly Wick



The 7th Annual Petaluma Footrace took place on April 10 with 940 local runners and walkers participating in what has become the kick off to the Petaluma Butter & Eggs week long celebrations. As you may know, this event benefits the Adobe Schools Kids (ASK) Foundation. The Petaluma Footrace was started by two Casa Grande students, Chris Mason and Ian Inman, as a fund raiser for their senior project. Seven years later, even after finishing college and starting their careers, these young men still are giving back to their community. Talk about your good eggs!!!

Perhaps, seeing how important the Petaluma Footrace is to the community, makes the hard work that goes into organizing the event worth the effort. Listening to Diane Zimmerman, the Superintendent of the Old Adobe Union School District, thanking the community for coming out to support their school district, made me smile as I choked back a few tears. In these difficult financial times, we all know how important donations are to our local school programs. This run raised a record \$17,000 for the charity. Equally as important, are the individual stories of setting a goal, working hard to ensure success and finally completing the journey.

Everyone has a different reason for why they got out of bed on Sunday, April 10 to run or walk five or three miles. For the top runners in the 5 mile race, like Alex Wolf-Root, 24, from Santa Rosa, who comfortably ran a 5:16 mile pace to win the race, it might be to better his time from last year. Phil Johnson, ran an impressive 5:56 pace and was the first finisher from Petaluma and 4th overall. At just 18 years old, Phil will only get faster, so watch out Alex! For Kim Baumann, 43, the top female and 19th overall, 6:41 mile pace, her reason might be to inspire her students at Grant School to follow in her speedy foot steps! I know that Ron Svinth, 51, had to feel good about finishing 11th overall and first place in 50-59 making all us over 50 proud!



Then there are the rest of us who are just trying to finish. This race was a victory of sorts for me. My first race back after fighting uterine cancer. Yes, it was hard. Ya, it hurt. No, I wasn't happy with my time but that is the burden of being a competitive athlete – we are rarely ever satisfied. I was however, grateful. Grateful for my health, for the opportunity to run in a beautiful park on a beautiful day with my husband and 938 of my friends and neighbors. Grateful for the opportunity to watch others enjoy their personal triumphs.



One of the most inspiring runners I saw was a fellow who was running his first race. He was on the last mile of the 3 mile course, at the section of the race where the two races merge. I was feeling pretty spent at this time and was beginning to slow down and mentally give up. Just at that time I heard my friend and trainer, Char, yell out "You're not stopping until we reach that fire hydrant! Then we will take it from there!" She wasn't talking to me, but when I saw the determination on the face of the fellow she was talking to, I give my inner wimp a kick in the pants and picked up my pace! (Char also happens to be a retired US Army Sargent, so when she says you can do it – YOU WILL DO IT!) At the end of the race I tracked Char down and asked her about the fellow she was training. He successful completed the course, totally exhausted but filled with pride for finishing the course with a personal best time. Wow! I would also like to congratulate Deborah Hatfield, 50, who won her age division and set a personal record for her time. Deborah just started running last year to improve her fitness. Now she is faster than runners half her age!!!

There are 940 different stories to tell about this race. I would love to hear yours – you might inspire someone else to lace up and try an event! To the 940 winners who got out of bed on April 10 and participated in the 7th Annual Petaluma Footrace we thank you all for making this race the success it is for Petaluma! Continuing to build on the success of this race Chris Mason is introducing the Moo Cow Half Marathon on Sept. 18. So get moo-ving and start training. You can be a part of Petaluma history. [Editors Note: Published with permission from the "Pacing Petaluma" Blog at Petaluma360.com]