

ROTARY CLUB OF SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO
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MEMO L.A. Marathon ASB SRLA



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Marco F. Forster Middle School

25601 Camino del Avion • San Juan Capistrano • California 92675
(949) 234-5907 • FAX (949) 488-3567

Dear Rotary Club Members of San Juan Capistrano,

Thank you so much for your generous \$4,000.00 donation and continuing support of our "marathon team" at Marco Forster M.S. With your help, our team of 32 middle school students completed the 26.2 mile L.A. Marathon this year on March 24th.

When school starts again, we will begin our 20th Los Angeles Marathon training season at Marco Forster M.S. In September it will also be 20 years since Rotary of San Juan Capistrano first became involved with our program at Marco. I thought it might be fitting at this time to give a little background of our program, and also to explain just exactly how your support benefits our students.

First of all, our team at Marco is part of a much larger program called Students Run L.A. or "SRLA". This program started "unintentionally" over 30 years ago when three continuation high school teachers in East Los Angeles, challenged some of their students who were in trouble or headed for it, to train with them for the LA Marathon. Their students not only finished the LA Marathon but finished high school and went on to college and jobs as well.

In 1989, Roberta Weintraub, a member of the Los Angeles Board of Education at the time, recognized that what these teachers were doing with their small groups was an effective and innovative dropout prevention after-school program and established what is now known as the SRLA program in the LA Unified School District.

Students Run LA eventually became an independent non-profit organization with programs throughout the greater Los Angeles area. Students Run L.A.'s mission is, "to challenge at-risk secondary students 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." The program has vastly grown from

the original three teachers with a handful of students. Today there are 500 Leaders and 3,250 students from 180 schools participating in SRLA but the mission of the program remains the same.

Over the last twenty years, we at Marco Forster M.S. have witnessed first-hand the positive benefits SRLA has had on our participants. For many students, training for a marathon represents the first time that they have committed to and accomplished a specific goal. We have seen this translate into improved attitudes, behaviors, and academic commitment in our participants. Training for the marathon teaches our students responsibility and discipline. It gives them confidence and creates "can do" attitudes. They begin to enjoy running, and develop the habit of physical fitness and healthy living. Students from all ethnic groups, cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds meet one another and experience an important sense of belonging.

We are grateful to Carrie Bertini who, as an assistant principal, introduced SRLA to Marco Forster in the beginning of the 2000-2001 school year. Her enthusiasm for running and commitment to our students was contagious. She even managed to convince someone like me, who had never run more than 3 miles at one time, to help coach!

We are also grateful to Rotary who supported our program at Marco from the beginning. During that first year, Carrie mentioned to a fellow Rotarian and marathon runner, Ray Perez, that many of our student runners couldn't afford running shoes. A few days later, we ran with our students from Marco Forster to Big 5 in Capistrano Beach one afternoon after school. Our students left Big 5 wearing brand new shoes generously paid for by Rotary!

The main SRLA organization now provides our students with running shoes and race uniforms. They also pay our race entry fees to SRLA events, including race entry for the L.A. Marathon, but we have many other expenses that our students fundraise for during the year. During the season, as part of our preparation for the Marathon, we participate with the larger SRLA group in various training races, including a 5K, a 10K, a 15K, 2 Half-Marathons and an 18 mile race. These races are in and around Los Angeles. Our school doesn't qualify for SRLA funded transportation making the cost of transportation to these races one of our biggest expenses. We use Rotary donations to help with the cost of our school bus

transportation to and from these events. Most of our students would not be able to attend these races if we couldn't provide transportation.

That first year Rotary suggested we stay in Los Angeles on the night before the marathon and donated the cost of our students' hotel rooms. We have continued with this tradition, because it allows our students to participate in the pre-race excitement leading up to the big event. We are able to go to the Marathon Expo on Saturday afternoon, and eat a carbo-load dinner as a group that Saturday night before the race. Because we wake up in a hotel 10 minutes away from the start line on race morning, we can "sleep in", grab a shuttle in front of our hotel, and still make the 7:00 a.m. start with plenty of time to spare! This is a huge treat for our runners after 6 months of hard work and training!

Each year I am inspired by my fellow coaches. They are teachers, administrators, staff, and parents of Marco Forster who volunteer hundreds of hours of their time, after school, and on weekends to train alongside and mentor our students. The support of our San Juan Capistrano Rotary Club is not only financial, but is a huge morale boost as well, for us volunteer coaches who are out there on the trail!

This last March, I completed my 19th L.A. Marathon with the students at Marco Forster. Every year since that first season, I have witnessed the transformation in our students, and when I see the excitement on their faces when they are finally wearing their finisher medals, I am "hooked" to do it all over again!

Thank you for your help in making it possible for us to cross the finish line again this year.

Carla Kallen and the SRLA team at Marco Forster M.S.

3 positive experiences and things I learn from running the LA Marathon

1. One thing I learned is that everything is possible. When we started training to be on the team, I first thought I was never going to be ever to run a marathon or just plain be on the team and the second I finished the LA Marathon I realized that It's actually over all the pain is done and that I did it, that everything is possible
2. Another thing I learned from training for the marathon is that Pain is temporary that if your going to do a sport or just do anything it's going to take hard work and dedication and if they were really determined they would try their best on every practice and stay out of trouble and that once you finish the race the next 2 days the pain is almost gone but if you quit the pain with you stays forever and your going to look back at it but in the wrong way but if you finish the whole thing the experience and lesson you learned stays with you forever and you could look back at it in the good and right way and should be happy about no matter the time
3. Another thing I learned from running and training for the LA marathon is the appreciate things and appreciate them when you have them. At first when we were training I thought it was going to never end and once it did end I had lots of free time and that I missed running with the team, my friends which I would consider family because we had something in common and were dedicated on doing what we did and it's not the same when I run by myself and that we should all appreciate that Marco Foster Middle School has this wonderful program that changes people lives and health

Summary of Marco Forster's SRLA Expenses 2018-2019:

Hotel Rooms night Before L.A. Marathon: \$3,561.00
Carbo Load Dinner night before L.A. Marathon: \$1,020.08
Food Items for Barbecue after 18 mile race: \$196.94
Bus Transportation to and from races: \$2,110.64
Gatorade, Snacks, Breakfast Items, Postage, misc.: \$460.60
Candy to sell at Family Fun Night fundraiser: \$328.56

Grand total: \$7,677.82