Running for a cause


Runner Emerita Torres, who competed on behalf of BronxWorks, crosses the finish line at the 2013 ING New York City Marathon.

BronxWorks has announced that eight runners in the New York City Marathon raised $30,288 in contributions for the organization.

Among the eight runners are several with Bronx connections, including a Lehman College professor, a Bronx high school teacher and a Bronx native with the U.S. Diplomatic Corps. They were among 50,266 finishers in the Nov. 3rd race, part of the largest field of runners in the event’s history.

“We’re very grateful for these runners' support of BronxWorks. Both their athletic and fundraising efforts are remarkable accomplishments,” commented Cathy Sharp, BronxWorks' Director of Individual and Corporate Relations. She and fellow staffer Courtney Wong coordinated BronxWorks’ participation in the marathon.

“Each runner on our team made a commitment to raise a specific amount from friends, colleagues and
other contacts,” explained Sharp. “In this case, the goal for each runner was $3,000. We were very fortunate this year in that all eight who ran on behalf of BronxWorks surpassed this benchmark.” Many of the runners noted that the opportunity to help an organization like BronxWorks added to the fulfillment they experience testing their stamina by running the marathon.

“It was a real privilege for me to raise money for such a great organization in my home borough,” said Emerita Torres, who said she usually is stationed in foreign countries with the Diplomatic Corps for up to two years at a time.

“Thank you for giving me an opportunity to give back in a meaningful way.”

Stephen Bonnett recalls he started running as a way to escape the stresses of teaching high school students. On a Friday in May of his first year of teaching, “I left my wallet and phone at home, and with only my keys on me, ran until I exhausted myself,” he said.

“Once I returned home and mapped my route, I discovered that I’d gone over five miles. And I was hooked. Recently I’ve found a way to use the running I now have a passion for to actually help solve the problems that so often hold my students back.”

Chris Bonastia, the Lehman College professor, is the most experienced runner of the three. He previously ran the Chicago Marathon last fall – and raised money for BronxWorks there. In 2010, he also ran the ING New York City Marathon on behalf of BronxWorks. The new funding contributed to BronxWorks from the marathon runners and their friends and family will support programs for children and youth in the South Bronx, Sharp said. They include after-school programs and summer day camps for low income families, programs designed to help teens to successfully make the transition from grade school or middle school to high school, and recreational and educational programs for children living in BronxWorks’ three transitional residences for homeless families.

For more on BronxWorks, please visit www.bronxworks.org.

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