

## The Healthy Kids Series



# Siblings Stride Towards Fitness

| BY JENNIFER BOSSE |



At the Marine Corps Marathon Healthy Kids Fun Run each runner may compete as an individual, but this doesn't mean they have to run alone. Last year over 1,100 siblings participated in the one-mile run that encourages good health, fitness and sportsmanship. The non-competitive race simultaneously promotes the values of staying active and having fun.

Running with a partner offers children the perfect amount of encouragement and motivation needed for success. Children naturally have more energy than adults and enjoy being social. Encourage your children to strengthen their relationships by running together and setting goals for themselves. Your children will motivate each other, but more importantly, they will have a good time doing so.

Madeline, age 13 of McClean, Virginia, a three-year veteran of the Healthy Kids Fun Run, views running as a bonding experience she is able to share with her three siblings. Madeline's favorite part about running with her brothers and sisters is the time they spend together. The siblings attend different schools, yet running is one activity where they can come together, spend time with each other and remain active. Madeline's adrenaline kicks up toward the end of the race as spectators cheer her on and she feels accomplished when she crosses the finish line. However,

her favorite part about the Healthy Kids Fun Run is not earning a ribbon herself, but getting to cheer on her younger siblings as they cross the finish line.

For Madeline, age 9, of Alexandria, Virginia, it's all about the companionship of running with her little sister Amelia. They encourage each other to reach their full running potential and are each other's biggest supporters. Madeline said her favorite thing to do after a big race is to sit down with her younger sister and grab a glass of water. She believes that, "if you're exhausted you know you've had a good workout." Madeline and Amelia are both students of Hollin Meadows Elementary School and are members of the school's running club. Madeline looks forward to practices with her sister where they can run around and be active together.

While some siblings run side by side, Liam, age 9, of Arlington, Virginia, prefers a little sibling rivalry. He enjoys the competitive nature of running. Liam's favorite part about crossing the finish line is feeling accomplished and earning a ribbon for his efforts. Liam states that he enjoys running with his brothers and sisters, however he enjoys beating them even more. Liam's mother, Maureen, credits Liam's running talents to his school's dedicated PE teacher. She says Liam, one of six

children, runs for fun at least once a week but becomes competitive when he starts racing his siblings.

If you are wondering how to get your children running and where to begin, the answer is simple—in your own front yard. Unlike other sports, the great thing about running is that it does not require an array of equipment. Your children simply need to lace up their shoes and they are ready to hit the pavement. The goal of keeping your children's running experience fun can be achieved by a few simple methods:

### Create a log to track your children's progress.

Along with allowing them to monitor their success, a log will provide your children with an exciting visual tool that enables them to set goals and plan future runs.

### Create a running group.

Your children will enjoy the social outlet a running group creates and the camaraderie that comes along with it. Group members help to motivate and inspire each other to reach their running potential.

### Include a variety of workouts.

Changing up the pace and the running route will keep your children's runs exciting and interactive. Don't just stick to the cement, plan trail runs and relay runs that create an energetic atmosphere.

Whether your children are running for fun or competition, the most important thing is that they enjoy themselves. The Healthy Kids Fun Run invites parents, runners and friends to visit Camp Miles - a post-race activity area hosted by the National Children's Museum. It's here that sibling mascots, Miles and Molly promote health and awareness by providing participants with interactive games and physical challenges. Don't let your children miss out on the opportunity to participate in this year's Healthy Kids Fun Run to be held on Saturday, October, 24. The one-mile run begins at 10:30 a.m. in the Pentagon North Parking lot and is open to children between the ages of 6-13. For a small entry fee of \$5, all participants will receive a t-shirt, medal and snacks at the finish line. On-site registration is not available, so run to your computer and register your children today! [wFm](#)

Articles in the Healthy Kids Series are presented by the Marine Corps Marathon Healthy Kids Fun Run to be held on October 24, 2009. The one-mile run welcomes children ages 6-13. Registration is available on [www.marinemarathon.com](http://www.marinemarathon.com).

Jennifer Bosse is a member of the Sponsorship and Marketing Team for the Marine Corps Marathon. No federal or Marine Corps endorsement implied.

