CHILDREN S'MILES '07 & '08

The staff would like to thank all of you – runners, walkers, cheerleaders and supporters for a job well done. The following is a race day account sent to us by someone who is committed to helping the hurting children and their families.

Hello everyone!! :)

Well, believe it or not, I just completed my first marathon! I can honestly say that crossing that finish line made all of the sacrifice, blood, sweat, and tears worth it!

I was nervous that the weather would not cooperate as forecasters were calling for rain and thunderstorms Sunday AM. Eric turned on the TV right after my alarm clock went off at 2:59AM. I was not happy to hear the hotter than anticipated temp. But, as my training book had instructed me in Chapter 2-Wk 2....I quickly added "but it doesn't matter" to the end of my negative thought.

I geared up and headed off to meet up with the rest of NACoA. it was now 3:40AM.I was nervous I would not be able to find the team or the bus. Eric could see the stress in my eyes and without hesitation put on some jeans and flip flops and walked with me to ensure I made it. It was then that I realized how truly lucky I am to have such an amazing husband.

I met up with my team and after a quick bagel and banana was off to the race. While standing in line to check my belongings, the MC reminded us again that this was the hottest start temp of any Disney Marathon. I quickly thought to myself...."but it doesn't matter".
The time drew closer and before I knew it we were singing the National Anthem. The MC asked for any service personnel running the race to raise their hands. There was a female behind me that raised her hand so proudly. I turned around and shook her hand. The wheelchair racers started, followed by fireworks and the sound of the gun. We were off!
It is funny how the first 8 miles went by soooo fast! I just was thinking about seeing my family and friends at 9 miles. The same thought kept me going strong to 13 where I knew I would see them again. I will never forget how it felt to see my "peeps" cheering me on.

TEAM NACoA Disney World 2008

It was after 13 that I started to realize what I was in for. Things were getting tougher. About that time, I overheard a spectator giving us the option of turning around and running "13 back or 13 forward-not much of a choice now!" It was sooo true! I still felt great despite the humidity and was elated when I found the "Bio freeze" at the med tents. It's like Icy Hot but better. Runners drench their body's with it to help their muscles from cramping.

Everyone was warning me about miles 19-21. At Disney, this stretch is on some back streets behind Animal Kingdom. It's very dull and this is where a lot of people hit "The Wall". Luckily I had read a quote somewhere that said, "The wall is as big as you make it!" I kept telling

myself that. Combining that positive thought with anticipating how awful these 3 miles were, I was ready to take them on and I did just that.

I think I actually picked up some of my pace in that time period. There was also a huge u-turn in that area that a lot of runners complained about. Turns out, I loved it because on the way back down the "u", you got to look at all of the runners that were behind you. It made me feel strong.

I have to be honest here. 22 -23 was TOUGH! Thank god my friend Nichole was able to be at mile 23 in MGM Studios. I had prepped her to bring orange slices and a smile. That kept my spirits up until I saw her. And she delivered ....orange slices and encouraging "keep going!". That is just what I did until 24.5. You know you are almost there, but you have to really dig deep. I did that and thought about my journey.

I thought about how inspired I was by my sister in-law Mel finishing last year and how proud she would be of me. I thought about my mom and brother and how much this charity meant to me and to them. The three of us have stuck together through a lot and we are all stronger for it! This was for them and for the unfortunate children that were not lucky enough to have a courageous mother like I had. This run was to help one child understand that it is not his or her fault that their parents or parent is sick from drug or alcohol addiction. This run was for my husband who believed in me even when I did not. Just knowing him makes me want to be a better person. Powerful thoughts these were, but I was still struggling to keep moving forward. About that time, a "running angel" came up behind me. She seemed so happy and started rattling off all of the reasons I should start picking up my pace. One was that the pride would last so much longer than the next 8 minutes of excruciating pain. The other was that if I waited to pass out at the med tent, they would give me some good pain pills. I laughed and started running again. I never got to thank her, but she was truly heaven sent. I am convinced of that.

The next half mile seemed like 20, but I soon saw a choir singing and shortly after the Finish Line was in view. As I crossed, I cried tears of joy and was greeted by my sister in law who had finished and waited for me. The tears had yet to dry when I was met with hugs and kisses from my family and friends.

To all of you that have supported me in this venture...those who donated in tough times, those who gave words of encouragement, and those who were there...thank you from the very bottom of my heart. I truly could not have accomplished this without you. And please sleep well tonight knowing that you have helped a friend, but more importantly, you have helped children all over this country to lead a better life.

Teresa

Finish time:
5 hours 33 minutes 14 seconds