

Fun runs: bringing miles of smiles to children

By Deanne Haines
Special to the Lakes Edition

As a runner, it's exciting to cross the finish line of a race with my children cheering me on. It's even more of a thrill, however, to stand at the tape and root for my young daughter as she dashes to the finish line of her version of "mommy's race" - a half-mile kids fun run.

Fun runs provide a unique way to introduce children to the lifelong habit of keeping active. In recent years there's been a boom in racing events for children, some starting as soon as a baby can crawl. Diaper dashes, toddler trots and children's fun runs are popping up all over the country offering children of every age and running ability the chance to race.

Studies show that preschool children in the U.S. spend between 2.5 and 5 hours with screen media each day, while older children consume an average of 7 hours of screen media daily. As more schools are eliminating gym classes, it's up to us as parents to help our children discover an eagerness for exercise. Why not sign them up for a fun run?

Shari Moelenkamp entered her daughter, Hailey, in a fun run. "I can tell she feels excited to be a part of the event. She loves picking up her race packet and pinning on her number - it makes her

feel important and part of a group."

The excitement and anticipation of running a race, the simple freedom that comes from running, along with a medal, ribbon, or T-shirt at the finish line, make fun runs for children exactly what they say - fun!

There are many ways your child can benefit from participating in a fun run.

Healthy fun

According to the American Heart Association, childhood obesity is now the number one health concern among parents in the U.S. - topping drug abuse and smoking. With childhood obesity rates tripling in the past 30 years, it's no secret we need to do more to keep our kids physically fit.

The Centers for Disease Control recommends children engage in at least one hour of physical activity each day. Exercise strengthens bones, improves heart health, and controls weight, as well as reduces anxiety, stress, and improves self-esteem.

Shari says participating in fun runs has improved Hailey's self-confidence. "I can tell by the proud smile on her face when she recalls the races to family and friends."

Carol Goodrow, author of the book Kids Running: Have Fun, Get Faster & Go Farther, encourages parents to get

their child excited about running. "Running is natural for children. It allows them to set and reach goals."

That's a major reason

Hailey enjoys running. "The best part of a fun run is that it makes me feel good to accomplish a mile - it makes me feel proud."

Eye-opening fun
Many children are exposed to sports at a young age. They may start kicking the soccer ball around as a toddler. They may

swing a bat and play T-ball as a preschooler. Fun runs open children's eyes to the world of running.

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Cheer on your child at one of these local fun runs

JUNE

Name: Verona Hometown Days Fun Run
Location: Harriet Park (414 Mary Lou St, Verona)
Date: **Sunday, June 4**
Race time: Registration 11:15 a.m. outside of Sugar River Church, Race: 11:40 a.m.
Distance: .5 or 1 mile Fee: Free
More info: veronaareaccboosters@gmail.com or sites.google.com/site/veronacrosscountryboosters/home/hometown-days-fun-run

Name: Tame the Flame
Location: Firemen's Park, Deerfield
Date: **Sunday, June 11**
Race time: 11:05 a.m. Distance: 2 miles
Fee: \$15 (children under age 13)
Website: facebook.com/rundeerfield

Name: Hot2Trot Firemen's Festival Run
Location: Firemen's Park (Clark St., Cottage Grove)
Date: **Saturday, June 17**
Race time: 8 a.m. Distance: 1K
Fee: \$10 Website: hot2trotcottagegrove.org

Name: Muddy Maniacs Adventure Mud Run
Location: Terrace Park (123 S. 2nd St., Delavan)
Date: **Saturday, June 24**
Race time: 9 a.m. (ages 11-14), 9:30 a.m. (ages 7-11), 10:15 a.m. (ages 4-6)
Distance: 1+ mile (includes obstacles through mud)
Fee: \$25 through June 2, \$30 beginning June 3
Website: activekids.com

JULY

Name: Kishwaukee Nature Conservancy Run/Walk
Location: 251 Elkhorn Rd., Williams Bay
Date: **Saturday, July 1**
Race time: 8 a.m. Distance: 1/4 mile
Fee: \$12 before June 16, \$15 after June 16
Website: friendsofknc.org

Name: Evansville 4th of July Run
Location: Lake Leota Park, Evansville
Date: **Tuesday, July 4**
Race time: 7:35 a.m. Distance: 1 mile
Fee: \$12 (through June 22), \$15 (after June 22) - ages 12 and under
Website: ecp-wi.org

Name: Cannonball Run
Location: Cambridge Fire and EMS Building (271 W. Main St., Cambridge)
Date: **Saturday, July 8** Race time: 8 a.m.
Distance: 1 mile Fee: \$15
Website: caemscannonballrun.com

Name: Delavan-Darien School District Run for Education
Location: Delavan-Darien High School (150 Cummings St., Delavan)
Date: **Saturday, July 29**
Race time: 9 a.m. (children 10 and under)
Distance: 1K Fee: \$10
Website: runforeducationwi.org

Name: Waunafest Run
Location: Waunakee Village Center (333 S. Madison St., Waunakee)
Date: **Saturday, July 29**
Race time: 9:30 a.m. (children 8 and under)
Distance: 800 yards or less (grouped and distances by age)
Fee: \$10 Website: waunafestrun.org

AUGUST

Name: Book'n It For Literacy
Location: Sheehan Park (1351 Linnerud Dr., Sun Prairie)
Date: **Saturday, Aug. 5** Race time: TBD
Distance: 100 Meter dash (children 10 and under)
Fee: \$5 donation (no t-shirt), \$15 (includes t-shirt)
Website: sunlibfoundation.org





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Friday, July 14



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Wednesday, July 12



Brothers Osborne
Saturday
July 15



Badger Truck Pull
Thursday, July 13



Action Auto Demo Derby
Sunday, July 16



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June 9 - 10	Big Hat Rodeo
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Aug. 21	Rotary Brat Fry
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Sept. 8 - 10	WI Sheep & Wool Festival
Sept. 15 - 17	Gemeutlichkeit Days

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