



**PRESS RELEASE**  
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## **TWO LOCAL JUNIORS PROGRAMS BRING 400 YOUNGSTERS TO PATHFINDER PEDIATRIC 2K START LINE**

THE WOODLANDS, TX (February 13, 2013) – The second annual Pathfinder Pediatric 2K Fun Run and Walk is pleased to once again to host the smiling faces of youngsters and their families as they embark on -- or continue -- a life-long love of running at this year's Fidelity Investments The Woodlands Marathon, to be held here on Saturday, March 2, 2013.

"I love what The Woodlands Marathon Management and 2K race directors have accomplished in a short period of time," said Pathfinder Pediatric Home Care administrator **Matt Wilcox**. "Teaching children at an early age about healthy living and active lifestyles will reward our community for a lifetime."

The Pathfinder Pediatric 2K Fun Run and Walk begins at 1 p.m. and participants will traverse the streets of Town Center, passing over the waterway on Six Pines and completing the course by crossing the same finish line as marathon, half marathon and 5K runners earlier in the day along the waterway.

Approximately 400 youngsters from two area running clubs – The Woodlands Running Club and Spring ISD's Ponderosa Running Club -- will be among the 550 registered participants in this year's event.

Prior to race day, more than half of these young runners will have run 25 miles – or more – since September of last year.

Race day will mark the completion of their marathon journey and will allow them to receive not only a 2K finisher's medal but also a marathon medal, just like the adults.

"We are a year ahead of where we thought we would be as this was slated as a second-year program initiative," said race director **Willie Fowlkes**. "We are really excited about what this program's future is with not only the local Juniors programs, but those across the greater Houston area. Our goal for 2014 is for there to be 10 programs representing approximately 1,000 kids."

The Woodlands Running Club led the way, initiating its program a year ago under the direction of **Dana-Susan Crews** and **Mary Kerschbaum** and then partnered with the marathon to help approximately 50 boys and girls complete their miles and earn their medals.

"Our clubs require the kids to log at least 25 miles by March 2 and then do the 2K for a total of 26.2 miles, which is why they receive the 2K medal and the actual marathon medal," said Crews. "Those who do not finish all of their miles are encouraged to run the 2K anyway."

"We tell them all to be proud of their accomplishments no matter how many miles they complete. They are incredibly excited about the race."

With the assistance of two Conroe ISD physical education teachers, **Kaci Bale** from Galatas Elementary and **Tim Russell** from Buckalew Elementary; **Christi Moore**, a former competitive gymnast turned triathlete/marathoner, and **Heather Weis**, a former occupational therapist who helped the program a year ago, Crews has seen The Woodlands Running Club program grow to more than 250 youngsters this season.

Last year's success encouraged Lonestar Multisport president and Ponderosa Elementary's **Lori Culberson** to initiate a sister program at her Spring ISD school, the Ponderosa Running Club, which included nearly 150 kids.

Both programs started on September 8 last year. The Juniors run on Saturday mornings and Wednesday nights where each workout includes warm ups and drills before embarking on their run.

Each youngster maintained a running log, which coaches signed as they completed each mile.

"Our kids were also encouraged to do as many local races as possible and when they showed us their medal or bib from those, we gave them credit in their running logs," Crews added.

During the holiday season, near the midway point in their programs, the two clubs participated together in their own "Jingle Bell Run".

"We met at Market Street (in The Woodlands), wore jingle bells on our shoes, had cookies and candy canes following," said Crews. "The best part is that we all brought canned food items to donate and filled up an SUV with donated food (for the St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church Food Pantry in The Woodlands)."

The impact, though, Crews explained, is much greater.

"I cannot begin to tell you how thrilling it is to see the smiles on these kids' faces while they run," she said. "It's so amazing that something as simple as running can bless our lives so much."

And race management couldn't be more appreciative.

"We cannot thank these volunteers enough for the impact they are having on these young kid's lives," added Fowlkes.

### **About The Woodlands Marathon Management**

The Woodlands Marathon Management is an event production company that operates with a primary goal of providing individuals the opportunity to participate in a running event that promotes the advancement of running. The directors of The Woodlands Marathon Management share a passion for The Woodlands community, the Houston region and the active sport lifestyle. They have teamed up to produce this premier event that will provide The Woodlands and surrounding communities options for living a healthy lifestyle with purpose.

### **About Pathfinder Pediatric Home Care**

Headquartered in The Woodlands and serving patients from five locations covering 49 Texas counties, Pathfinder Pediatric Home Care is a family owned company with over 15 years' experience providing physical, occupational and speech therapy service to the children of Texas. Pathfinder works hand in hand with the families they serve to positively impact the lives of children. Their goal is to provide each patient with outcome oriented care tailored to put each child on a path to physical and social independence. For more information on Pathfinder Pediatric Home Care, go to <http://www.pathfinderpediatrics.com/>.

### **About The Woodlands**

Located just 30 minutes north of Houston, Texas and minutes from George Bush Intercontinental Airport, The Woodlands is the destination for leisure guests, individual business travelers and groups of all sizes. Visitors to The Woodlands enjoy more than eight million square feet of world-class shopping, dining and entertainment options, more than 194 miles of hike-and-bike trails, 124 parks, the 1,700-acre George Mitchell Nature Preserve, the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion, kayaking on Lake Woodlands, and taking a cruise on The Woodlands Waterway. The Woodlands features world-class sporting events including the Memorial Hermann Ironman Texas, Insperity Golf Championship and the Nike South Invitational. The Woodlands also is home to more than 1,500 guestrooms in upscale and boutique properties, select service, limited service, conference and convention centers and a resort.

For more information on The Woodlands, go to [www.VisitTheWoodlands.com](http://www.VisitTheWoodlands.com). Also, “like” The Woodlands Convention & Visitors Bureau on Facebook at [www.Facebook.com/VisitTheWoodlands](http://www.Facebook.com/VisitTheWoodlands), “follow” them on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/TheWoodlandsCVB](http://www.twitter.com/TheWoodlandsCVB) and “view” them on YouTube at [www.YouTube.com/TheWoodlandsCVB](http://www.YouTube.com/TheWoodlandsCVB).

For more information, please visit the event website at <http://www.thewoodlandsmarathon.com/>.

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