



Runnin'

GET ACTIVE, GET MOVING,
GET RUNNING — BECAUSE YOU CAN!

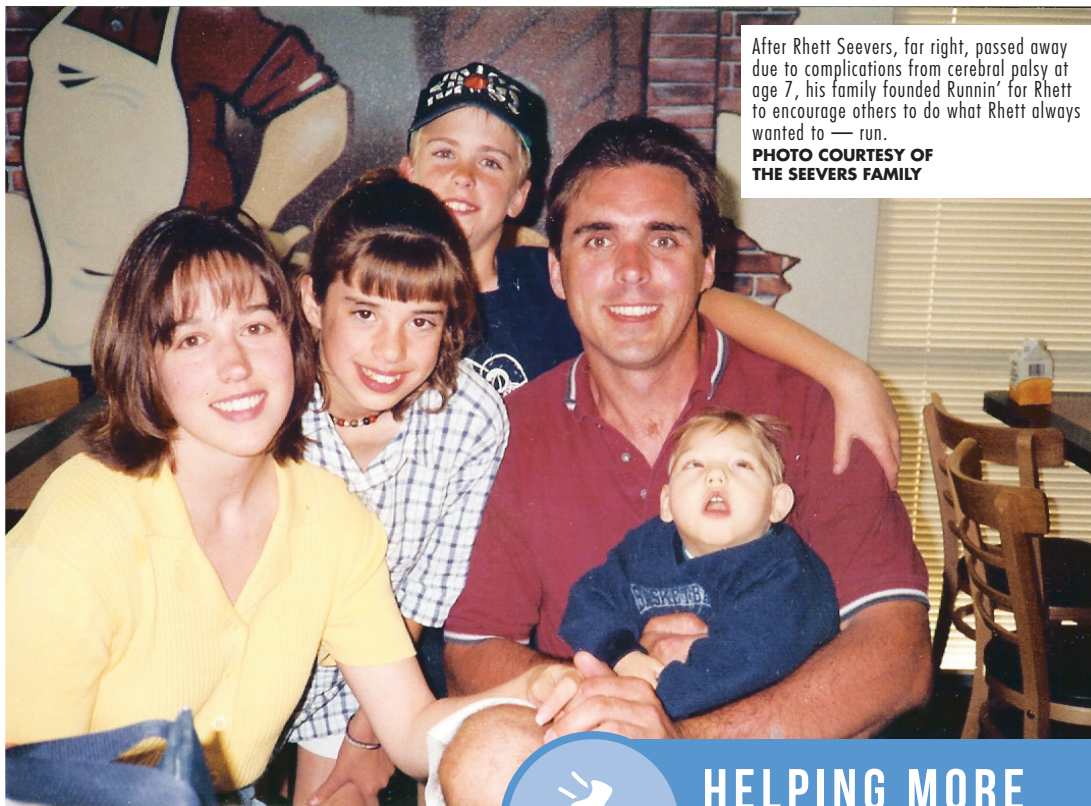
for RHETT



Learn how
your school can
participate in Runnin'
for Rhett's **FREE**
Youth Fitness
Program!

'Move Into Life'

BY ANNE STOKES



After Rhett Seevers, far right, passed away due to complications from cerebral palsy at age 7, his family founded Runnin' for Rhett to encourage others to do what Rhett always wanted to — run.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE SEEVERS FAMILY

FAMILY WORKS TO CREATE A HEALTHIER COMMUNITY IN SON'S MEMORY

Rhett Seevers had an infectious laugh that would pop up unexpectedly. His favorite place to be was at home and with his family. Rhett was also born with cerebral palsy. Though he wasn't able to run or walk on his own, he loved being in motion — finding joy when his family took him on long walks outdoors in a stroller.

"Rhett was full of life, though his disability made it hard for him to do a lot of things," says his mother, Beth Seevers. "He welcomed everyone in the morning with a huge smile on his face."

In 2004, Rhett passed away at the age of 7. To help process her grief, Beth started running.

"I needed to identify myself as something *other* than a mother who had a son with special needs or a mother who had lost her child with special needs. That had been my life for the last seven years," she says. "Running helped me be able to identify as something different and it gave me an outlet to get through the grief of losing him."

A year later, Seevers was still running, still challenging herself further. When she signed up for her first half-marathon, she realized the race date — March 13 — was the first anniversary of Rhett's death.

"It was, 'I have to do this for something bigger and better than myself,'" she remembers. "When I crossed that finish

line, I looked to Randy, my husband, and I looked at my family and friends, and I said, 'We all have to do this. We all have to run for Rhett.'"

The next year, 35 friends and family members joined her, all running in the same baby blue shirts. In 2007, 125 people joined her. That same year, Beth and Randy

Seevers co-founded Runnin' for Rhett, a nonprofit foundation dedicated to encouraging people to lead healthier lives. In particular, the organization helps young children develop healthy physical fitness and nutrition habits through its Youth Fitness Program, which encourages kids to not take for granted something Rhett always wanted to do — run.

The free program offers activities for students ranging from elementary through high school.

Seevers says Runnin' for Rhett's motto, "Move into Life," is not only an encouragement to be active and healthy, but also to be an active participant in your community.

"It can mean something different for everyone," she says. "Some people can move into life after losing a job, or moving to a different time in their life — after a divorce or a death. We hear so many people's stories, and that's another one of our tag lines: 'Let Rhett be part of your story.' Everyone has a story, and I think that brings all of us together."



HELPING MORE STUDENTS

2010: Runnin' for Rhett's first Youth Fitness Program began with **104 students** at **2** Sacramento area schools

2018: the program has been implemented in 63 schools and reached 2,800 students in districts, including:

- Arcohe
- Buckeye
- Dry Creek
- Elk Grove
- Folsom Cordova
- Galt
- Lodi
- Natomas
- River Delta
- Robla
- Roseville
- Sacramento
- San Juan
- Twin Rivers
- Washington
- Woodland

Sponsorships:
\$26
per child

=

Cost to families
and schools:
\$0



2017: began partnership with **Sacramento Running Association** to train a total of **3,000** students from **66** schools for **California International Marathon's maraFUNrun 5K** every December.

COVER PHOTO BY MELISSA UROFF

More Miles to Run

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENT BUILDS ON LOVE OF RUNNING WITH HEALTHY HABITS



Emmalee Cowey, 12, who recently ran in Runnin' for Rhett's Run Because You Can race, has been participating in the organization's Youth Fitness Program for several years.

PHOTO BY MELISSA UROFF

BY ANNE STOKES

Emmalee Cowey has been running for Rhett longer than she can remember, ever since her family participated in the program years ago.

In fact, Emmalee was so young at her first race, she was in a stroller, according to Janet Marsh, her grandmother.

"She wanted to run — at that age, they all want to run — she got out of the stroller and started running," says Marsh, "and [her] grandpa ended up carrying her the rest of the way."

Today, as a 6th grader at Marengo Ranch Elementary School in Galt, Emmalee is still running for Rhett.

The 12-year-old says it's gratifying to see all her hard work pay off, especially last season when she shaved one minute off her mile run time.

"I've been doing it for so long and I want to keep on doing it because I love it. ... I love being able to watch all the kids being able to run and have fun, and I love knowing it's for a good

cause," she says. "For me, running to be Rhett's legs means to do what Rhett wanted to really badly, but still couldn't."

Emmalee says she's also picked up quite a few healthy habits from Runnin' for Rhett's Youth Fitness Program, habits that she shares with friends.

"I learned that exercise is very, very important [and] that you can't just live off of junk food. You need to add healthy foods to your diet, like fruits and vegetables," she says. "Honestly, I don't think I would have gained any of those healthy habits if not for Runnin' for Rhett, which is another reason I love it so much."

And she's not the only one. Marsh, who also works in Marengo Ranch's cafeteria, says she sees firsthand how those healthy living messages are getting through to students.

"I see a lot of the kids when they come through the line ... who want to eat their vegetables and they want to drink their milk. It's really good to see," she says. "It's really good to see kids ask for the vegetables, which is a good thing instead of the junk food that they'd have had prior."

Another member of Emmalee's family will keep the Runnin' for Rhett tradition going next year. Her younger brother, who will be starting second grade in the fall, will join her at the starting line.

"I want to keep on doing it because I love it ... and I love knowing it's for a good cause."

Emmalee Cowey
6th grader, Marengo
Ranch Elementary School



GET RUNNING

Runnin' for Rhett wants to make sure a healthier lifestyle is accessible for everyone — no matter their age or ability! That's why the nonprofit makes it easy for schools and students to participate, so kids can become more active.

TRAINING CURRICULUM

- Two 7-week training sessions in the fall (October-December) and spring (February-April), both of which end in a 5K race
- Training focuses on conditioning through running and circuit training exercises
- Nutritional education includes hydration and healthy food choices
- Training can be scheduled after school or incorporated into pre-existing physical education curriculum
- Accommodations can be made for students with disabilities

FREE RACE ENTRY

- Every program participant's timed 5K race entry fee is completely covered
- Runners receive a baby blue shirt and wristband to sport their Runnin' for Rhett pride
- Community members — teachers, friends, families and nonparticipating students — can get a discounted entry fee as well
- Every racer who finishes receives a commemorative medal

COACH SUPPORT

- Coaches are provided with training and curriculum to empower them and their students
- Youth Fitness Program committee members can speak at an assembly or provide coaches with an informational video to energize students
- Coaches receive a small stipend based on the number of students who register for the 5K race



Maya Calderon Diltz credits Runnin' for Rhett for helping her run. Each year, she challenges herself to run faster.
PHOTO BY MELISSA UROFF

“I joined Runnin' for Rhett because it's all about getting out and doing something.”

Maya Calderon Diltz
Sophomore, Sheldon High School

She Refuses to Quit



**DON'T FORGET
THE SWAG**

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT RACES AGAINST ASTHMA WITH RUNNIN' FOR RHETT

BY RODNEY OROSCO

By the time she chugged her way to the last kilometer in the spring Runnin' for Rhett 5K race, Maya Calderon Diltz had a moment familiar to seasoned runners but especially impactful given all that she had achieved. Prior to joining Runnin' for Rhett, Maya was only able to run for a short span of time because of her asthma.

“It was gratifying to see the stadium in the distance and know I was almost done,” the Sheldon High School sophomore says, “and I also knew I still had a ways to go.”

Maya, whose interests don't typically include running but instead theater arts, music and drawing, laughs when she explains the sight, “That last part was the hardest part.”

But, Maya is not one to give up.

As someone with asthma running their first race, the Runnin' for Rhett event left a lasting impression on Maya.

“Next year, I am going to challenge myself to beat my time,” she says.

That is exactly the type of spirit Runnin' for Rhett loves to hear from one of its first-time runners. The mission of Runnin' for Rhett's Youth Fitness Program is to get students moving — an ongoing accomplishment for Maya.

“I plan on running it every year through the rest of high school,” she says. “Before this I could barely run for five minutes straight.”

Maya was initially inspired by a video her PE teacher played during class.

“Ms. Ramondini showed a Runnin' for Rhett video in our class and she handed out flyers, and she advocated for the race,” Maya says.

The organization's message of getting out and moving, doing it because you can and not as a competition, struck a cord with Maya.

“I joined Runnin' for Rhett because it's all about getting out and *doing* something,” she says. “It's about coming out of your shell.”

The organization also helps students lead lifestyles that will inspire healthy choices for the rest of their lives.

“The videos talked about a healthy lifestyle, eating well, and getting enough sleep,” says Maya, emphasizing the last element with a chuckle. “They made sense, and I've definitely made some changes in my life because of it.”

While running with her friends prepared her for the physical part of the race, Maya didn't anticipate how the energy of the event would keep her going.

“The race was chaotic, fun,” she says. “Once I started running, it was very motivating to see so many people running for the same thing. I saw lots of kids. And, I saw a man running in a gorilla suit. Cool.”

TRAINING

On their first day of training, all students receive a Runnin' for Rhett wristband to match the baby blue race shirts. With hard work and good sportsmanship, trainees also have the chance to win more prizes, like:

- Water bottles
- Blue bouncy balls
- Slap bands
- Sunglasses

RACE DAY

Students who register for the Runnin' for Rhett race receive the following complimentary items:

- Race entry
- T-shirt
- Finisher's medal

AFTER PARTY

The week after the race, Runnin' for Rhett holds a Rollin' for Rhett night to celebrate a job well-done. Students and their families are invited to a free skate party at an area skating rink. The party includes:

- Entry to the rink
- Raffle ticket for more Rhett swag

Passing ← the → Torch

RUNNIN' FOR RHETT LETS TEACHER
SHARE HIS PASSION WITH HIS STUDENTS

BY ANNE STOKES

For Leonardo Zamudio, running has been a lifelong passion. Growing up in Fresno, he ran cross-country while still in elementary school. Years later, when he started teaching third grade in 2008, he struggled to find similar opportunities for his students in Sacramento.

“Running has been a great part of my life, and I want to share that with the kids,” he says. “I ran in high school, I ran in college. I wouldn’t be where I’m at if it hadn’t been for the discipline that running taught me.”

He found Runnin’ for Rhett’s free Youth Fitness Program on his school district’s website. It provided structured training schedules, healthy nutrition plans and race participation opportunities he felt were a perfect fit for his students at Edward Kemble Elementary School in South Sacramento. He has been a Runnin’ for Rhett coach ever since, helping students set and achieve goals.

Zamudio says the program is very popular with the kids, who connect emotionally with Rhett’s story and the program’s message of empathy, acceptance and living a healthy lifestyle.

“They have a connection with someone who wasn’t as physically blessed as they are, and thankfully they’re able to take advantage of what they have and really live life to the fullest,” he says.

“It’s about being
the best that you
can be.”

Leonardo Zamudio
Coach, Runnin’ for Rhett
Youth Fitness Program

He says the program is inclusive, benefitting students of all ages and abilities. It also allows runners to set goals and track their progress, and provides prizes and incentives — such as race shirts, ribbons and medals — to keep students excited and engaged.

“Runnin’ for Rhett makes it very easy for us to follow the program,” he says. “It’s a lot of support and the students feel like they’re a part of something.

They have pride not just in themselves, but in this big group of students who are ‘moving into life.’”

At the end of every season, students are encouraged to compete in a 5K race.

“Every student who has done the race has finished the race,” he says. “Whatever fitness level you’re at, you can do it, whether you may have to stop and walk for a while. You may not be going at the same pace as everyone else, but you’re doing it for *yourself*. I think it’s a really good message that we don’t always have to be the best, it’s about being the best that you can be, not comparing yourself to other people.”

For more information on how to become a Youth Fitness Program coach or bring the Youth Fitness Program to your child’s school, visit www.runninforrhett.org or call Lisa O’Shea at 916-812-7996.

Runnin’ for Rhett makes becoming a Youth Fitness Program coach easy, so students can benefit from the experience and passion of runners like Leonardo Zamudio.

PHOTO BY ANNE STOKES



COACHING MADE EASY

Helping students form healthy habits wouldn’t be possible without the help and passion of Runnin’ for Rhett coaches! The organization provides all the tools required for training students, making participation almost effortless.

PRE-SEASON TRAINING

- Overview of Runnin’ for Rhett’s mission
- Program components and expectations for participants
- Weekly curriculum that covers training plans, appropriate hydration and nutrition habits, and race day etiquette
- Online instructional videos

DUTIES

- Facilitate at least two training sessions a week for the duration of the 7-week program
- Complete pre- and post-training testing of students
- Coaches determine the number of students and age ranges they accept into their program
- Runnin’ for Rhett also provides coaches with a stipend based on the number of students registered for the race from their school

Something ← for → Every Student



Laura Uslan, principal of both Clarksburg Middle School and Delta High School, has students from both of her schools running for Rhett.
PHOTO BY ANNE STOKES

SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETS STATE-MANDATED STANDARDS AND TEACHES MORE HEALTHY HABITS

BY ANNE STOKES

As principal of both Clarksburg Middle School and Delta High School, Laura Uslan knows how hard it can be to accommodate hundreds of students at many different ability levels. But when she found Runnin' for Rhett's Youth Fitness Program five years ago, she knew right away it would be a good fit for both of her schools.

"It fits beautifully with our PE curriculum because of the focus on fitness, doing your very best and running your own race. You don't have to win the race, you just have to get up and 'Move into Life,'" she says. "As an administrator, it's really quite easy to implement. There are lots of models to follow."

Those models can be implemented at no cost to schools. Additionally, programs are flexible enough to be offered as an after-school program or incorporated into physical education curriculum, as Uslan did.

"We implement a great deal of our health curriculum through our PE classes at the middle and high school, and much of Runnin' for Rhett's training and curriculum is easily incorporated into class time," she says. "Students in the program do a little extra training to meet the Runnin' for Rhett training qualifications."

According to Uslan, the program is a wonderful way to meet state-mandated physical education standards while simultaneously helping kids develop healthy habits that will serve them for a lifetime.

"I think the model they've implemented for schools works so great because the kids feel that triumph in the training and they feel that triumph on race day," she says. "It's so great for kids to be able to cross that finish line, complete that race and get that medal."

Uslan says Rhett Seevers' story also resonates with kids, who can empathize with both his abilities and his struggles.

"I think they really become motivated because of Rhett's story, because the Runnin' for Rhett organization tells that story so well," she says. "It doesn't matter where you are on the fitness spectrum, you can move, you can get better, you can get stronger," she says.

Uslan says that she sees the same motivation in students who are naturally talented at running and those who need an extra push to complete a mile. They all sign up to do

the race.

"They're motivated by the story, and they'll go out there and do their very best," she says. "And through the training, they really do improve."

For more information on how to bring the Runnin' for Rhett Youth Fitness Program to your school or district, visit www.runninforrhett.org or call Lisa O'Shea at 916-812-7996.

"The kids feel that triumph in the training and they feel that triumph on race day."

Laura Uslan
Principal, Clarksburg Middle and Delta High Schools



MAKE AN IMPACT

Bringing Runnin' for Rhett's Youth Fitness Program to a school district couldn't be easier!

Take Galt Joint Union Elementary School District for instance. All seven schools in the district participate in the program, enrolling around 250 students each season, with each school averaging 35 to 40 students — all at zero cost to the district.

Karin Springer, Runnin' for Rhett board and Youth Fitness committee member, says that the program is a great tool for schools.

"With the obesity rate of young kids rising, it is also very important to teach students how to eat properly and how regular exercise has long term benefits," she says. "Our program offers the balance of these two learning opportunities and is helping to create healthier kids."

STUDENT BENEFITS:

- Provides nutrition curriculum, including hydration and everyday healthy eating choices
- Encourages students to be active during and after training seasons, including on weekends with family and friends

DISTRICT BENEFITS:

- Program is free
- Can be incorporated into instructional time and adapted to state-mandated curriculum
- Allows low-income schools and districts to offer students extracurricular or after-school programs

More Than

BY RODNEY OROSCO

Just a RACE



REP FOR RHETT

Q&A WITH DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT LARISA PERRYMAN

Runnin' for Rhett aims to inspire change. The organization prides itself on introducing people to a healthy lifestyle that they can easily adopt and maintain for the rest of their life through fitness and nutrition.

Runnin' for Rhett Director of Development Larisa Perryman takes that mission to heart. "Since I began working here, I have been re-educated and have developed a healthier lifestyle," she says. "It is a lifestyle I want to pass on to my son."

Perryman has seen firsthand how Runnin' for Rhett is able to convey these values — to individuals of any age or ability.

Q: How easy is it to participate in the Youth Fitness Program?

LP: It's really easy. To participate, a coach at the school — usually a teacher or staff member, and sometimes a parent — will confirm with the school administration that they want to apply for the program. They fill out the grant application, and then they are awarded a grant into our program. At each school, coaches send out flyers and information to participate in the program. Students have twice weekly training sessions for an hour each, and then they run in the race at the culmination of the training.

Q: How is the organization able to offer the program for free?

LP: We raise money through our adult training program, fundraising events and donations. Our supporters provide us enough money to fund more than 6,000 kids every year through the program. To become a sponsor, contact me at larisa@runninforrhett.org

Q: What is the adult fitness program?

LP: The adult fitness program, called the Blue Crew, is a program where adults train for any number of races including 5Ks, 10Ks, half marathons, marathons and ultra runs. We have workouts almost every day of the week, including speed, strength and long runs. Those who would rather pedal, can join the Bikin' for Rhett ride. The scenic bike ride winds its way from Davis to beautiful Winters, and back and is perfect for all level of riders.

Q: What is the "trickle up" effect?

LP: The trickle up effect is where the students in our youth fitness program go home and pass along the healthy habits they've learned. They invite their family to join them for walks after dinner, or to do push ups and crunches with them and to make healthier food choices — like buying veggies and fruit instead of chips for snacks. Ultimately, more than 1,000 of those friends and family members join the students at each target race. We love that our program results in healthier kids and a healthier community.

Runnin' for Rhett helps hundreds of students lead healthier lives each year, but that wouldn't be possible without its volunteers.

"We could not exist without our volunteers," says Runnin' for Rhett Director of Development Larisa Perryman. "They are so committed, and we are so grateful for them."

With more than 50 active volunteers year-round, and another 200-300 volunteers on race days, Runnin' for Rhett is dedicated to uplifting communities through healthy activities and lifelong habits.

INTERESTED IN MAKING A DIFFERENCE?
BECOME A RHETT REP TODAY!

WHAT IT TAKES:

- Rhett Reps are community members! Rhett Reps can be parents, grandparents, college students or anyone else who wants to help kids become more active and learn about healthy living.
- Reps can volunteer in fall and spring.
- Training sessions are held two times a week for one hour after school.
- Reps can volunteer for one or both sessions.
- Scheduling is flexible!
- Time commitments range from 12 hours a week for school helpers, to just four hours on race day.

RHETT REP JOBS:

- Help Runnin' for Rhett coaches at after-school youth training sessions
- At the training session, present two short provided lessons about nutrition and hydration
- Pass out prizes to kids for work ethic, improving run times and good sportsmanship
- Run, walk and play with the kids at training sessions
- Tell Rhett's story to students and help them relate



Coach Michelle Restrepo and runner Layla Beltran from Bridgeway Island Elementary School in West Sacramento cross the finish line together of the Run Because You Can race on April 22, 2018.

PHOTO BY MELISSA UROFF

Get Out and Get MOVING!

VISIT WWW.RUNNINFORRHETT.ORG TO

- Apply for the Youth Fitness Program
- Volunteer your time
- Support our events
- Train with us
- Become a Rhett Rep
- Donate to Runnin' for Rhett
- Sponsor our program



HEAD TO THE RACES

MARAFUNRUN 5K

When: December
Who: Kids 14 & under
Where: Capitol Mall
Cost: Free! (\$10 for family members)

RUN BECAUSE YOU CAN 5K

When: April
Who: Everyone! Kids 1/4 mile dash for 11 & under only
Where: Sacramento City College
Cost: Free! (Adults \$25-40. Kids 1/4 mile pay \$10, includes a T-shirt)



PHOTO COURTESY OF
BOB AND MARCY CROWLEY

"The Sacramento Running Association's purpose is to inspire achievement step-by-step, and no one in Sacramento helps us do that more in the youth fitness space than Runnin' for Rhett."

Scott Abbott

Executive Director, Sacramento Running Association