

What It's Like to Run a Marathon for Friendship Circle

Three runners recently represented Friendship Circle of Charlotte in the Miami Marathon. Their task: Raise \$3500 for the Friendship Circle, spend an inspirational Shabbat in Miami learning all about Judaism's unique approach to special needs, and of course run a marathon. Here is a personal account by one of the runners, Carrie Rabinowitz.

By Carrie Rabinowitz

How can you tell if someone has run a marathon? Don't worry, they'll tell you.

I am so proud that I participated in The Friendship Circle Miami Marathon. I only ran the half marathon, so I'm only half crazy, but I am completely grateful that I did it.

For me, it wasn't a race. A race is something you try to win and I was pretty sure I wasn't going to beat 25,000 other runners to the finish line. Rather, for me, it was a run. It was a journey, both physically and mentally, when I committed last May. Could my legs carry me 13.1 miles? Could I

commit to a training schedule? Would I be stalwart enough to run in the rain, in the Charlotte humidity, in the cold?

I wasn't prepared when I got to the starting line at 4:58 A.M. that Sunday morning. It was Miami; it was supposed to be warm and sunny, right? But because of 42 degrees and 16 mph winds, I wasn't able to wear the clothes I had trained in and was comfortable in – I had to spend Friday shopping for cold-weather running gear and had only ripped off the tags as I walked out the hotel room door. I huddled with the other runners as we waited an hour for our race to begin.

There's something bonding about suffering with others. Not that this was any catastrophic event. But here we were, every single one of us, shivering from the cold and with anticipation of getting started. Here we were, 25,000 people, propelling ourselves, in any and every way we could, toward the finish line. Here we were, all seemingly with the

same goal, but with as many different reasons to run as there were body types, ages, and abilities. Here we were, all running the same race, all doing the best we could.

I had several moments of clarity while running the streets of South Beach. I had a couple of hours to think. I thought about my family and their endless encouragement. I was thankful for my cheering squad – my mother – who raced out of town two days early with me to beat the forecasted ice storm and put up with my panic attack the day before the event. And the morale boosts from

unexpected sources – from a friend with whom I hadn't spoken in a while, from honks and fist pumps when I was struggling up the hills on Providence Road, from the cop who stopped traffic on Highway 51 so that I didn't have to break my stride.

It's amazing to know people are cheering for you, no matter the challenge.

I'm not a graceful runner, and I was definitely more of a tortoise than a hare, but I finished. That was my challenge.

Thank you to Chaya Groner, Carrie Rabinowitz, and Lauren Stark for representing Friendship




Circle of Charlotte at Team Friendship Miami.

Learn more at TeamFriendship.org!

Friendship Circle is a Beneficiary Agency of the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte. ✡

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Legacy Story

Judie and Mike Van Glish

Judie and Mike Van Glish are among the 323 individuals and families in our community who have created 668 unique legacy gifts to support its future. Please take the time to read their story and thank them for their generosity. It is our hope that you will be inspired and encouraged to help sustain our Jewish community by creating your own Jewish legacy.

By Mike Van Glish

After two especially bad winters in New Jersey, Judie and I decided there must be a better place to raise our young family. Through my business travels I had become familiar with Charlotte. Providing our children, David and Melissa, with a strong Jewish identity was a priority. We trav-

eled to Charlotte and toured the JCC, Temple Israel in Dilworth, and Wallace's kosher butcher shop. We arrived in Charlotte in 1977 and found it very welcoming.

Judie grew up with an Orthodox background in Lakewood, NJ. Her grandfather was an active Zionist and very philanthropic, donating a Torah to the congregation. I grew up in Ocean Township, NJ raised in a Conservative congregation. We met on a blind date in 1964 and were married two years later.

It was easy being Jewish in the Northeast but once in Charlotte it required a bit more effort. Temple Israel and the Jewish Community Center (now LJCC) provided reli-

gious education for our children, spiritual support, programs, and the opportunity to socialize with other Jewish families. The majority of our life-long friendships were established during those early years. We all gained a greater sense and purpose of our Jewish identity.

The vision of Shalom Park made it easier for our family, and many others, to interact, develop relationships and build strong Jewish lives. While serving as President of the Levine Jewish Community Center I was able to participate in our community's collaborative efforts. A third generation of Van Glish's have now benefitted from our community. Our grandchildren have attended both the Jewish Preschool on Sardis and the Charlotte Jewish Day School and participated in numerous activities at the LJCC. There are many more Jewish experiences available to them than existed for their parents. We take pride in the work of Jewish Family Services and appreciate the support provided by the Jewish Federation.

Judie and I feel it is our generation's turn to continue the legacy that was created from the vision of those who preceded us. Today, young and more seasoned families have so many ways to connect with their Jewish heritage. We feel it is important to grow and perpetuate the programs being offered so future generations will have the same opportunities. We are very fortunate that through our legacy gift we have the opportunity to assure that others will have the same wonderful and positive Jewish experiences growing up and living in Charlotte. ✡

Jewish War Veterans Reunion Luncheon

12:30 - March 20, 2016

~ OPEN TO ALL VETERANS ~

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