

Schuetz, Suarez's raising money with "Trot for Scott"

The Strader family has a tradition of running long distances, and doing so at an unmatched pace. When it comes to high school track and cross country, the name "Strader" has frequently popped up on the list of medalists over the years, and after high school competition ends, the name is seen just as often in local 5K runs, triathlons and the annual French Market race.

The Straders' love for running and athletic competition made it that much more difficult for Scott Strader and his family when he was first diagnosed with cancer seven years ago and was told he had no choice but to stop running. Although Scott's cancer started in his appendix and spread to his abdomen, he continues to fight through the pain of recurring tumors and remains strong despite the odds of survival doctors originally gave him.

The perseverance Scott has shown is fitting for a family that is accustomed to pushing through the obstacles of long-distance racing. For that reason, Scott's daughter Sydney Strader and some of her high school

teammates have created a benefit run/walk event that goes hand in hand with the family's enjoyment of athletic competition.

The "Trot for Scott," which will be held Aug. 15 on the North side of the Holton square, was organized by three of Sydney's friends from high school: Maggie Schuetz, Aleesa Suarez and Kadi Suarez. The cost of the race is a free-will donation, and the money will help the Strader family pay for doctor visits and transportation costs.

With more than a week remaining before the event, more than \$1,000 has already been raised. Kristi Suarez, mother of Aleesa and Kadi, has helped with the event by providing an adult signature whenever necessary, but says the rest of the details have been taken care of entirely by the girls.

"We picked up \$500 from Scott's work (Blue Cross), there were three checks yesterday that totaled \$300 and I've collected about 10 checks myself for shirt donations between \$12 and \$50," Kristi said. "And this is solely done by Sydney's friends.

The Straders aren't the kind of family that wants to pass around hand-outs and ask for help. This is just something Sydney's friends really wanted to do."

Scott frequently coached youth teams and entered the French Market run every year, and when he was no longer able to run in the competition, the girls started running for him.

"They found the cancer in July of '02 and he always ran in the French Market in September, so the girls decided then that they would run in honor of him," Kristi said. "They had a group running for him and called it the 'Trot for Scott.' Seven years later, he's still battling the cancer and they're still running for him."

This year, the efforts of Schuetz and the Suarez's have expanded far beyond a small group and not just in Holton, but throughout the state and even as far as Minnesota.

"They have relatives in Minnesota that can't come," Kristi said. "But they're organizing their own 'Trot for Scott,' and they've ordered shirts directly from Custom Creations. I assume they're all runners there.

Running is just in the Strader blood. So they're taking shirt orders there, and Maggie's taken some of her own. She's put info about the event on facebook and it's really spread to a lot of people."

Another online source for updates on Scott's condition are posted by his wife, Diann Strader, on caringbridge.com/visit/scottstrader. The online journal is updated several times everyday by Diann, allowing friends and family to stay in the loop and post their own words of encouragement.

Since being released from the hospital in Creighton last week, Scott has returned home with Diann for the time being. Although the time together should have been a relief for the Straders and their children, Taylor, 21, Sydney, 17 and Riley, 11, Diann reported yesterday that she felt a lump on her neck. Because Diann has previously been diagnosed with breast cancer, the lump put yet another scare in the family. Fortunately, the first post Diann put on caringbridge today began with "Wahhhhhoooo" as she shared the news that

her biopsy turned out to be OK.

Although Kristi said the Straders are usually private people and would not want a lot of attention, the caringbridge journal has served as an outlet for Diann to connect with relatives and friends.

"We had to talk them into even letting us pass out the fliers about the event," Kristi said. "But caringbridge has helped them a lot, at least giving Diann somewhere to go to talk about what's going on and how they're feeling and not have to repeat it in public 100 times."

Girls from Holton High School have gone business-to-business spreading word of the event, and Kristi said several donations have been taken from groups Scott and Diann belong to in Holton and Topeka. Sabetha and Holton's running clubs will participate, and runners from Marysville have said they will enter the event as well. Kristi emphasized that "Trot for Scott" is not just for runners, and people can walk or don't even have to participate in the event at all to donate money.

Check-in for the event will be at

5th and New York Avenue at 8:30 a.m. on Aug. 15, with a fun run starting at 9 a.m. and the 5K following at approximately 9:30 a.m. Kristi said shirts should be pre-ordered by Aug. 10, and although some will be available at the event, there is no guarantee on sizes at that time.

"We ask that people donate a minimum of \$12 if they want a shirt," Kristi said. "That pays for the shirt and includes a small donation, but after that people can give however much or little they want. They've both struggled from cancer, but what Diann said on the journal is that more than anything it's unfair for the kids. The response we've gotten for the event is great, and for a family that's been through so much, they deserve the community's support."

To order shirts or get more details on the event, contact the Suarez's at 364-2849 or Custom Creations at 364-4774.

Trot For Scott

Benefit Run/Walk

***1 mile Fun Run & 5K run/walk to
benefit the Scott Strader family
in his battle with cancer.***

Sat., August 15

Check-in begins at 8:30 a.m.

Fun Run starts at 9 a.m. • 5K follows at approx. 9:30 a.m.

**CHECK IN is on the North side of the square in downtown
Holton, 5th & New York Ave.**

COST is free-will donation with a minimum of \$12/person for a t-shirt.



Pre-order shirts by August 10.

Contact: Suarez's 364-2849

Maggie Schuetz: 364-8158

Custom Creations: 364-4774

Make checks payable to: Trot for Scott.

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