



A special running event this April, the Tupelo Public School District Kids' Run, is being planned for grades 3-6 elementary students of the TPSD. It will bring students and adults from across the district together as they represent their own schools as teams. We need the support of people like you to make this an outstanding event that will energize and empower many children across our school district.

Though this run can be as simple as drawing a line on the ground and saying "mark, set, go," we would like the people and resources to make this an outstanding annual event that many children and parents will plan their spring day around.

The event will consist of 1-mile runs divided by grade level. It will take place behind Tupelo High School. They will start in the practice field, run around the parking lot behind the football stadium, and finish by entering the stadium in order to finish with one lap on the track in front of the stands.

The goal for some will be simply to complete the distance, whether jogging or walking. Others will strive to compete for awards or just see how fast they can finish. Either way, the focus should be placed more on participation and effort rather than results.

For the sake of competition and school unity, each elementary school will compete as a team for a trophy to be passed from one winning school to the next on a yearly basis. The 6th graders of Milam Elementary will be divided into 2 teams for their own intra-school competition.

Similar to a typical "fun run" at an average foot race, t-shirts and finishers' awards will be given to all participants in this "kid friendly" distance of 1 mile.

However, unlike a fun run, this event will provide racing bibs (a.k.a. race numbers) and results will be processed and printed. These results will be divided according to grade and gender. Awards will be given to top finishers of each division. The top runners overall will qualify to compete in a special race during the Tupelo High School Track Meet (the Daily Journal Relays) the following week.

After the run, refreshments, including water, some type of sports drink, and food such as fruit and granola bars will be provided.

As the runners and spectators await the awards ceremony, the simple, yet commendable act of participation will be celebrated, health and fitness will be promoted, and a presentation will be given of upcoming running opportunities (such as the Gum Tree Fun Run). Also, an introduction to what cross country can provide them once they reach middle school can be given. Some time should be available for a simple line

dance (very popular among kids) and a chance to climb the National Guard sponsored climbing wall.

I believe the elementary runners will be most impressed by the attention they'll get from teenagers of the Tupelo Cross Country team as these fine young role models coach the children along, cheer for them, and perhaps run alongside them.

Our concept has the support of many people including Mayor Jack Reed's Healthy Task Force and Hank Boerner, director of the NMMC Wellness Center. Craig Horton said he is interested in Power 101 Radio covering the event. Mike Lail, organizer of the Shake Rag Half Marathon and past Tupelo marathons, is helping me plan and organize this event along with Tupelo Cross Country head coaches Anna Katherine (Hill) Sloan and Jonathan Begnaud.

The proposed date is Saturday, April 21st.

We also need financial sponsors for things such as t-shirts that will serve as "badges of honor" for our children. More importantly, financial support will keep the cost of entry fees down and make this running event accessible to many kids that may not be able to enter a typical 5k run or fun run. (The budget will be determined by the financial support we receive during the next several weeks.)

Most of all, we need cheerleaders that will help our kids feel good about themselves and mentors that show them the virtue of serving others.

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Praise and support move children, and children can move mountains.