

# MCRRC Intervals

May 2021

Newsletter of the *montgomery county road runners club*

## On the Horizon

**Saturday, May 1**

Riley's Rumble Half Marathon  
Riley's Lock  
Poolesville, MD

**Saturday, May 15**

Germantown 5 Miler  
Black Hill Regional Park  
Boyd's, MD

**Sunday, May 23**

\*Run Aware 5K XC  
Cabin John Regional Park  
Bethesda, MD

**Saturday, June 19**

\*Run for Roses 5K (ladies only)  
Wheaton Regional Park  
Wheaton, MD  
[www.mcrrcrunforroses.org](http://www.mcrrcrunforroses.org)

**Saturday, July 17**

\*Little Bennett 10K XC  
Little Bennett Regional Park  
Clarksburg, MD

Races with asterisks are permit pending. For the most updated information, please visit our website:  
[www.mcrrc.org](http://www.mcrrc.org)

## Board Meetings

Board Meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month.

## MCRRC Swings into Spring Racing



Photo: Dan Reichmann

MCRRC Competitive Racing Team member Gene Park splashes through Spin in the Woods 4 Miler.



Photo: Bruce Lemieux

Asuncion Musumeci cruises downhill during Seneca Greenway Trail 50K.



Photo: Nicolas Cruzier

Angela Cason, Holly Wittsack, and Roman Kastin tackle one of many hills at Piece of Cake 10K.



# New Normals

by Amy Lin

Spring has sprung, and MCRRC has brought back several in-person races since the beginning of the year, with more to come. Our updated procedures might take a little getting used to, but as evidenced by the smiling faces on race days, Club members are thrilled to be racing once more. Our much vaunted summer training programs will again start in a virtual format, but this time around the anticipation of gathering in person looks as though it will be met. I've never before been so excited about getting jabbed in the arm, and I can't wait to train with a group again, though I'm certainly getting much more skilled at recognizing masked friends on the trails.

Other new normals: Washing hands all the time; taking a mask everywhere I go (even to the mailbox at the end of the block); checking the weather multiple times a day (instead of just the week leading up to a goal race) to see if I can have outdoor coffee with a friend; and running, walking, or biking as often as possible (instead of driving or using public transportation). Those ubiquitous virtual distance challenges have definitely kept me from being glued to my computer screen all day long (even when working on this newsletter).

In this issue of Intervals, we welcome our new board members! Incoming MCRRC President Brad Stewart expresses thanks to our outgoing board members for their

dedicated service and updates us on the Club's latest events and plans. Also, Conroy Zien offers up some of his favorite running reads for anyone with a little extra quiet time and Debbie Sinnott provides some essential 411 about snakes we might find on Montgomery County trails.

This month's Runner Profile features two hardworking Club members, mother and daughter runners Anny Rosenthal and Cameron Jackson, each of whom is a delight on her own as well as together. In our Coaches' Corner, veteran coach Wanda Walters advises how to take advantage of Strava for group motivation.

I can't help but feel happy when I see trees flowering, leaves popping, and new plants sprouting. Here's hoping that the new normals of in-person racing and training bring the same cheer to all our members. Happy spring, MCRRC!



## MCRRC Intervals

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Have comments or questions? Or want to help? Contact us at [Intervals@mcrcc.org](mailto:Intervals@mcrcc.org).

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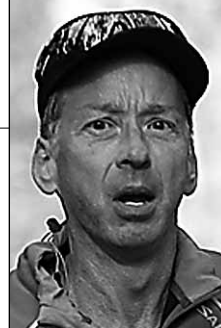
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MCRRC is a non-profit, educational organization which promotes personal health and fitness through the sport of running. The club conducts regular running activities, including training sessions races, seminars, and social events.



# Welcome to the Reopening of MCRRC

by Brad Stewart



**W**elcome! I thank you for trusting me as your newly elected MCRRC President, and look forward to welcoming you back to group running with the Club. The road ahead (or trail, if you prefer) looks open and inviting. This past year has been difficult for all of us, placing tremendous health, financial, and emotional burdens on our community. We hope that this issue of Intervals comes at a time when there is light at the end of this tunnel, and our lives can return to something much closer to the “normal” we knew before.

As the pandemic stopped our programs and races, the MCRRC Board worked diligently to help the Club get through this difficult period. We are thankful for the dedication and foresight of those who preceded us, to ensure we had the financial reserves necessary to weather what we hope is a once-in-a-lifetime global pandemic. As we move forward, we plan to provide information and updates to make your in-person return to our running community a positive experience.

## Planning Your Return to Running

Our Race Committee has been working tirelessly since it was organized in February 2020 to continually improve your race experience with MCRRC. Little did we know that their efforts would include navigating the difficulty of cancelling races through the pandemic, while simultaneously working to put together race plans allowing us to get permits to restart racing in Montgomery County. For our first few races, Seneca Creek Greenway 50K and Marathon, Piece of Cake 10K, and Spin in the Woods, we’ve had very limited notice due to health approvals being granted at the last minute. Currently, the county’s health approvals are being granted no more than two weeks before any event, so we thank you for your continued patience and understanding. Going forward, however, we will start letting you know

about pending events so that you can better plan your racing schedule. Look for updates soon through *Ins & Outs*, MCRRC Info, and on our website.

On Saturday, May 1, we welcome the return of Riley’s Rumble Half Marathon, this year located back on the historic C&O Canal. At the same time, we will be opening registration for Parks Half Marathon, which will be held on Sunday, September 26.

## Gearing up for Summer—and Vaccines

We are gearing up for summer with registrations opening soon for in-person training programs, including the Summer Half Marathon (SHM) program, the Experienced Marathon program (XMP) and the First Time Marathon (FTM) program.

To help us return safely to group running, we encourage all Club members to get vaccinated. Vaccinations are the most effective way to protect yourself and those around you. For more information about the safety and efficacy of COVID vaccines, please visit: <https://covidlink.maryland.gov/content/> MCRRC’s updated COVID policies are at: <https://mcrrc.org/covid-19-information/>

## Special Appreciation

We extend our special appreciation to Ken Earley for his leadership during this difficult period. Ken came back to the board four years ago, never expecting to lead us through one of the most tumultuous tenures in our Club’s history. Ken did this with grace, humility, and, of course, humor, and we are truly thankful for his efforts.

We also want to commend Ashley Zuraf, recipient of the President’s Award for her tireless work over her many years with MCRRC, particularly this past one. As our Executive Director, Ashley works to coordinate all of our programs and races, real and virtual.

She is our jane-of-all-trades, taking on multiple responsibilities to keep the Club operating. We are indebted to Ashley for her commitment.

We would also like to thank our outgoing board members-at-large: Carol Braun, Pete Haack, and Kristen (Seraphin) Kelman. Each of them dedicated significant time and their individual talents to make our Club better for all of us.

At the same time, we welcome our new, incoming board members: Secretary Sherene Sepehri and Members-at-Large Connie Corbett, Ashish Gupta, and Rob Palmer. We congratulate Brian Murphy, who was elected to serve as Vice President. Our Club is more than dusting off the running shoes and updating gear—it’s about community, family, and friendship. Starting now and continuing through 2021, I look forward to forming new friendships and renewing old ones with my fellow runners, as MCRRC speeds ahead.

*Some days it just flows and I feel like I’m born to do this. Other days, it feels like I’m trudging through hell. Every day I make the choice to show up and see what I’ve got, and to try and be better. My advice: Keep showing up!* —Des Linden

In 2018 Des became the first American female winner of the Boston Marathon in thirty-three years. On April 13, 2021, Des became the first woman to ever run 50K in under three hours, setting the women’s 50K world record with a time of 2:59:54.

*—Brad Stewart has been with MCRRC for almost a decade and joined the board in 2017. He ran his first marathon in 1996. He now coaches in the Experienced Marathon Program (XMP) and co-directs the Memorial 4 Miler.*

# Running by My Shelf

by Conroy Zien

**A** little more than a year ago, life as we knew it changed dramatically. As the novel coronavirus spread throughout the country, we were confronted with an uncertain future. For members of MCRRC, that meant the cancellation of Club races, training programs, and group runs. Many of us were left to find ways to get our running fix without the company of our training buddies.

If you are like me, running is a huge part of life. I feed off the energy of a good run with friends, usually ending with some great conversation over a cup of coffee afterwards. That usually gives me the energy boost I need for the remainder of my day.

As we slowly crawl back towards normalcy, I realize I have had some unexpected benefits of being more isolated during the past year. I was afforded the opportunity to read more, and many of the books were running-related. Here are a few of my favorite running books:

1. *My Year of Running Dangerously*, by Tom Foreman  
MCRRC member and CNN correspondent Tom Foreman tells the extremely entertaining story of his return to running and details his journey as he trained for several endurance races with his daughter. Tom's ability to blend humor and poignancy during this process makes this a tremendously fun (and funny) read.
2. *Let Your Mind Run*, by Deena Kastor  
Ever wonder what it's like to be an elite runner? This book provides a great peek into the life of one of the most distinguished runners in American history. Although she writes from the perspective

of an elite, the challenges she faced during her career, and more importantly, how she dealt with them, are relatable to all of us. This book will motivate you to see past your perceived limits and achieve success, not only in running, but in life.

3. *What I Talk About When I Talk About Running*, by Haruki Murakami  
Haruki Murakami's memoir of his life as a writer and runner is a beautiful read that left me inspired, smiling, and laughing, with a renewed appreciation of the sport I love.

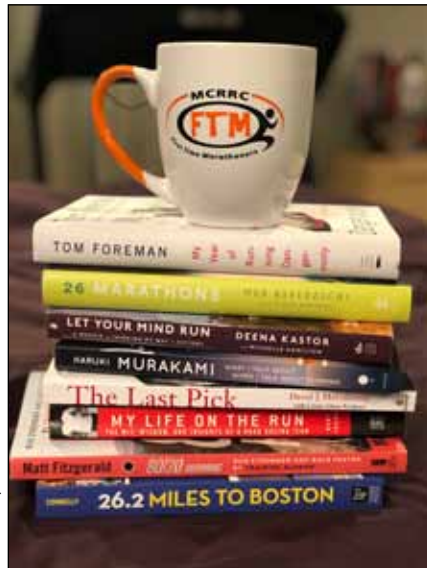


Photo: Conroy Zien

4. *My Life on the Run*, by Bart Yasso  
Bart Yasso's life is a combination of unbelievable athletic achievements, some of which are downright insane. Bart Yasso is the "Chief Running Officer" for *Runner's World*, and his life has been a series of wildly entertaining running stories.
5. *26 Marathons*, by Meb Keflezighi  
Meb is considered one of the greatest marathoners in American history. *26 Marathons* recaps

his running career in twenty-six chapters, each detailing one of the marathons he ran as a professional. Much like Deena Kastor's book, Meb offers a glimpse inside the life of an elite runner—the challenges, hurdles, and triumphs, and how he found the strength and courage to cement his legacy as an American champion.

6. *26.2 Miles to Boston*, by Michael Connelly [Editor's note: Other editions are titled *26 Miles to Boston*.] I read this book after I qualified for the Boston Marathon. If Boston is on your bucket list, this book provides you with great insight of what to expect along the journey from Hopkinton to Boston.
7. *The Last Pick*, by David McGillivray  
Many of you know Dave McGillivray as the race director of the Boston Marathon, but his life has been a lot more than that. This memoir details his journey, from the struggles of a small kid growing up, to getting fired from his job after running across the country, to directing the oldest (and arguably the most prestigious) marathon in the world.
8. *80/20 Running*, by Matt Fitzgerald  
I read this book as I was looking for ways to tweak my training during my chase for a Boston Marathon qualifying time. Matt Fitzgerald is a talented runner who has written many books about how to improve and achieve your goals. His books are very detailed and can be pretty technical at times, but the principles he discusses were effective and motivating for me.

—Conroy Zien joined MCRRC in 2007 and has been directing the First-Time Marathon program since 2012.

# Snake Encounters of the Maryland Kind

by Debbie Sinnott

**A** snake!” I bellowed as my brain slowly processed what I saw stretched across the path in front of us. My alert came too late for Becky, my running buddy, but she unknowingly hurdled the snake and came to a stop on the other side. We were on the C&O towpath about seven miles west from Riley’s Lock. Thanks to a recent Strava post I’d read, I was able to immediately identify the snake as a copperhead, and I was as scared of it as it was of me. Both Becky and I froze, and I slowly backed away, unaware of what to do in this situation.

In the state of Maryland, there are twenty-seven species of snakes you might encounter, but only two have enough bite venom to be of concern to humans. One, the timber rattlesnake, is easy to identify because of the rattles on its tail. They range in color from yellow to gray-and-brown with brown, V-shaped chevrons, to black or dark brown with black chevrons, and they are 36–60 inches in length. Timber rattlesnakes are found in northern and western Maryland in a range mostly north of Frederick, in forested areas with rocky outcrops. Therefore, these snakes are more of a danger to those running trails further north.

The other venomous snake in Maryland is the copperhead. These snakes range in size from 4–36 inches in length. The copperhead has a tan to copper-colored flattened head and hourglass or Hershey’s Kiss markings on its back. The markings can be pinkish-tan to dark brown in color. The young snakes have a yellow tail which they use to lure prey. Copperheads can be found almost anywhere in Maryland—in meadows, forests, swamps, sandy areas adjacent to swamps, and agricultural fields. Snakes are diurnal, meaning they are active

during daytime hours, in spring and fall, and nocturnal, or active at night, in summer when temperatures warm up. Trail users will need to take extra care this year, as Brood X cicadas will emerge in May, providing normally reclusive copperheads with an abundant and easy source of food and more reason to be out and about.

So, what should you do if you see a snake in your way? The biggest danger comes from stepping on them, so watch your step! Stay on trails and paths whenever possible. If you see a snake, slowly back away from it and wait for it to clear your path. Do not try to scare it to get it to move out of the way. Detour around the snake if possible. If your dog is venturing out on a run with you, keep it on the trail too. Pets can also get bitten by snakes that are hiding out just off the edge of well traveled paths.

If you happen to get bitten by a snake, try to get a good look at it or take a photo, for identification purposes. Call 911 immediately to seek medical care. In the unfortunate event that you get bitten by a poisonous snake, the earlier you get medical treatment, the better your prognosis.

Our story ended well. Without incident, the snake eventually slithered out of the way, and I quickly ran past. It was an encounter we will not soon forget!

References: [dnr.maryland.gov](http://dnr.maryland.gov) and [hikeitbaby.com](http://hikeitbaby.com)

—Debbie Sinnott joined MCRRC in 2018. She has coached in the Advanced Marathon Training program and often complains about running hills but runs them anyway.



Photo: Cadrin Lungu

A non-venomous juvenile DeKay's brown snake

# Cameron Jackson & Anny Rosenthal



by Lisa Levin

*Cameron Jackson grew up watching her mother, Anny Rosenthal, go out for runs at 4 am on weekday mornings so that she could run the twelve miles to work, and wondering why in the world she would do that to herself. To Cameron, running seemed boring and mundane. She didn't get the appeal and had no desire to be a runner. As fate would have it, Cameron found herself turning to running, on her mother's advice, to help improve her mental health while in college. Eventually, inspired by her experience spectating as her mother ran the 2013 Boston Marathon, Cameron tackled the marathon distance for the first time, running the 2015 Marine Corps Marathon with Anny by her side the entire race. Over the years, Anny and Cameron have participated in numerous MCRRC training programs and races, both as runners and volunteers, and have run countless races of all distances together, strengthening their mother-daughter bond and bringing each of them a new appreciation of their relationship. Anny, 71, a recipient of the 2010 MCRRC Female Grand Masters Runner of the Year Award, is officially retired but busy as ever, working as a senior advisor for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), while Cameron, 30, is finishing up her master's degree in social work and looking for a job in clinical social work.*

**Anny. were you athletic as a child? When and why did you start running?**

I was in school before Title IX, and I was the nerdy, uncoordinated kid who was always picked last for teams. But when we had to do our physical fitness tests every fall, I was one of the few girls who could run a whole mile. I

started running in the summer of 1977, to destress while studying for my bar exam. Running along the river early in the morning gave me my only respite from law books and also the only cool weather I had all summer.

**Cameron, what was your first race, and what do you remember most from that experience?**

My first race was the Run for Roses women's 5K in 2012. I asked my mom what she wanted for Mother's Day that year, and she really wanted to run this

how competitive my mom was.

What I remember most was how hot it was that day and that she absolutely kicked my butt in that race! I finished at least ten minutes behind her, but she was standing at the finish line cheering me on. I was miserable! After that I told her I wouldn't be running any races ever again! (That obviously didn't last very long.)

**Anny, do you try to give Cameron training advice? Have you learned anything from her with respect to training?**

I stopped giving Cameron advice many years ago! The one thing I remember telling her and had worked well for me in XMP was to drop back a pace group for long runs, but run with the faster group for track workouts. One thing I have tried to learn from Cameron is to go out slowly in a marathon. She has had negative splits in nearly every one she has run, while I think I may have managed it once.

**Cameron, how did the 2013 Boston Marathon inspire you to train for your first marathon?**

I have gone to every single Boston Marathon my mom has participated in since 2009. The 2013 race was obviously very different for every single runner and spectator that year. I was on the T heading to the finish line to meet my mom after the race. The T suddenly stopped, and the conductor announced that all transit services were suspended until further notice. Family members in Boston left me voicemails that there was a bombing at the finish line and told me to get off the train. I remember full out sprinting for what felt like fifty miles (but was probably closer



Photo: Michael Scaramino

**Anny Rosenthal and Cameron Jackson at the Autism Speaks 5K in 2019**

race "with" me. I say "with" because I was under the impression that we would run together, but I was sadly mistaken. When I lined up where my mom did at the start, she very tactfully said, "Um, this pace is probably too fast for you; you should probably seed yourself farther back." That's when I knew we wouldn't be running together! I don't think I realized until then just

to one) to get to the finish line to find my mom. It took me almost two hours to find her, and in that time, I saw every single person in the brownstones and apartments on Commonwealth Avenue come out with blankets, water, and food for all the runners who were stopped miles before the finish line. They invited runners into their homes to use landlines (the cell towers were jammed and not working) to call their loved ones. I had never witnessed such enormous amounts of support to total strangers before, and I kept thinking, “This is such a special community.” The feeling after leaving Boston that year really stuck with me and I knew I wanted to be part of something that unique.

***Anny, what are your favorite memories from races you’ve done together?***

Carb-loading on McDonald’s fries in our hotel room the day before Shamrock in 2016 is the first thing that comes to mind. Probably my favorite memory is when Cam asked me to run with her for her first marathon, Marine Corps 2015. When we got near the end she said, “I’m not going to be able to sprint up that hill.” I said neither was I, and then she took off and finished about ten seconds ahead of me. She said “Never again,” and I remember telling her nobody takes that seriously for at least forty-eight hours after your first. By the next evening she was telling me how much she’d learned from that race and all the things she would do better in her next one.

***Cameron, what running-related accomplishment makes you most proud of your mom?***

My mom’s first Boston qualifying race was huge! She trained so hard and was so dedicated. It was such a great race.

I’m also just really enormously proud of every race my mom runs. When people look at my mom they don’t automatically see how tenacious an athlete she is. She proves those people wrong in every single race. Don’t ever count out Anny Rosenthal!

***Anny, what running-related accomplishment makes you most proud of Cameron?***

There are so many, but I think I would say the 2017 and 2018 Richmond Marathons. The first was the first time she beat me; I was having my usual late-race fade at about Mile 25, and she passed me and asked if I was okay. Then I tried to keep up with her, or at least keep her in sight the rest of the race, but I couldn’t, and she finished almost a minute ahead, which was more than a twenty-minute PR for her. The next year, she ran it again, but I was dealing with an injury and stayed home tracking her. I remember looking at her 10K and half splits, the second faster than the first, and thinking she’d gone out too fast, and then at her twenty-mile split, where she was running faster still, and thinking she couldn’t keep it up, but would at least have another PR, and then her last 10K was her fastest yet (it may have even been a 10K PR), and she finished with a twenty-five-minute PR. I was so excited for her.

***How has running improved your life?***

**Cameron:** Running has given me so much. I’ve gained a healthier sense of self through running. Knowing that I can work through both physical and psychological challenges has been one of the greatest gifts. Running has also allowed me to be part of a community I would not have otherwise known about or sought out. The friendships I have gained through running and the

Club are lifelong bonds with people that share similar masochistic tendencies (ha, ha!).

**Anny:** Running has BEEN my life for so long. I ran my first marathon the year I got divorced. I was complaining to a colleague that I didn’t know how I could cope, and wouldn’t even be able to run with a five- and an eight-year old at home. He said, “Run a marathon.” I thought he was crazy, but he insisted. “Just do it, and then you’ll know you can do anything.” It pretty much worked. And now most of my friends are running friends, and so many of the high points of my life are running highs. And it has been so awesome to introduce Cameron to the sport and to watch her surpass me and develop her own group of running friends.

***Cameron, what’s the most important thing you’ve learned about running from your mom?***

My mom reminds me time and time again not to get caught up in the numbers of running (e.g. pace, mileage, etc.) and to run on feeling. She also reminds me to be patient. I am typically not a patient person, but running requires patience. Whether she means to or not, my mom has taught me the power of resilience and perseverance through running. She ran her first marathon in the middle of her divorce! She’s fallen (a lot!) and gets up stronger and more determined every single time. Nothing can keep her down for too long. She has shown me what real inner strength looks like and what it means to really believe in yourself. She doesn’t ever let self-doubt stand in her way.

—Lisa Levin has been with MCRRC for more than a decade. She is a member of the Competitive Racing Team and co-founder of Run Farther & Faster.

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## Coaches' Corner

by Wanda Walters

**A**fter a year of virtual coaching MCRRC's Summer Half Marathon (SHM) and 5K programs, much has evolved. Utilizing the Strava platform to forge a sense of community, connectedness, and accountability has been an unexpected game changer.

It all began when SHM program director Larry Feidelseit required all pace group coaches to create a Strava club. This was new to us all, and for a few, there was trepidation, but soon all pace groups had a Strava club, complete with standardized titling and MCRRC graphic.

Jay Porter, Jennifer Hendricks, and I coached the Run/Walk team. We soon noticed our members logging journal-like entries, complete with reflections and photos taken during their workouts. Team members responded with thumbs-ups and encouraging comments. What became evident was that members who submitted Strava data were more likely to attend our Zoom meetings and respond to emails. Ultimately, they were the participants who completed the program.

August brought the virtual Fall 5K program. As the program director, I created three program clubs, Blue/Yellow (fastest groups); Red (mid-pace groups) and Green/Purple (slower runners and walkers groups).

Fall 5K coaches selected one coach from each team as a Strava support coach. As with SHM, participants who recorded

their journeys in Strava also responded to emails, attended the Zooms, and completed the program.

Fast forward to 2021 Winter 5K. Spring-boarding from my Strava initiation and its predictor of participant retention, I communicated with the Winter 5K program directors, Travisha Gunter and Keith Ord, about piloting a weekly "Strava Shoutout." Every Sunday at 8 pm, my phone's alarm rang to remind me to copy and paste the Overall Winter 5K Leaderboard and each team's leaderboard into Sunday's "Strava Shoutout" group email.

Unlike race results, Strava rankings are determined by mileage, not pace. As coach Mary Travaglini reflected, the back-of-the-pack runners were now getting recognition for their effort, discipline, and commitment. MCRRC legendary octogenarian Michael Leonard typically ranked first on our leaderboard.

The 5K Leaderboards' individual weekly mileage ranged from more than twenty miles a week to as little as half a mile a week. The official program schedule became a guide that allowed participants the freedom to pursue personal goals. 5K Strava data includes all "footprint" workout miles (e.g., treadmill and outdoor running, walking, Zumba, etc). However, coaching staff did need to say that biking miles give an unfair advantage and shouldn't be counted!

I also created a Strava club (Fit-Fam) to encourage my extended family members to get moving during the winter. We live in different states, and my relatives have enjoyed the benefits of using Strava for accountability and positive feedback. Viewing their leaderboard in my weekly email has proven to be very motivational, and the competition is fierce!

In summary, whether Strava club members reside locally or are dispersed globally, they are motivated, connected, and united in achieving their fitness goals.

To quote Noelle Heyman, former SHM co-director, "As an older athlete returning to the sport after almost a decade, I love seeing AND sharing my progress on Strava. Using my phone, I find the voiced mileage (half-mile for me) and split pace indicators most helpful. And, humbling. And, MOTIVATING!!! I'm out there running again and enjoying every second of it!"

*—Wanda Walters joined MCRRC's 5K program in 2001 and since then has been involved in nearly all the Club training programs as a participant, coach, and/or administrator. What keeps Wanda so involved in MCRRC is the constant inspiration she receives from interacting with so many different runners, regardless of experience, pace, or age.*