

GARDEN SPOT VILLAGE ACCEPTS HANDS-ON HOUSE HALF MARATHON CHALLENGE

Community enters corporate teams of runners and walkers in Oct. 1 event

NEW HOLLAND, Pa. — Sept. 21, 2011 — When Hands-on House added a new Corporate Team Challenge to its annual Half Marathon and 5K Run this year, Garden Spot Village readily accepted. Garden Spot Village is entering two corporate teams—runners and walkers—in the half marathon fundraiser in Lancaster on Oct. 1.

Steve Lindsey, CEO, heard about the challenge and ran it past Lauren Graber, the organization's director of wellness.

"I put it out there, and now we have 12 team members participating—six runners and five or six walkers," Graber said.

Most of the runners on the team have completed full or half marathons. The walking team includes one individual who walked the half—13.1 miles—in the annual Garden Spot Village Marathon last April. Other members have walked 10Ks (approximately 6.2 miles). In the Hands-on House race, teams are placed according to the cumulative scores of the fastest four team members. Individual members are eligible for individual awards—but that's not necessarily why these team members are participating.

"We're all about completion, not competition," Graber said.

Graber said that many people today who are not elite racers are entering events just to give themselves a goal. Entering an event can be a boost, because it encourages a training mindset.

"Training is different than exercise. It makes you push yourself a little bit further," she said.

Team members have lots of opportunity to train. With events like its own USA Track & Field (USATF)-certified marathon and half marathon, and programs like The Biggest Loser, Garden Spot Village encourages team members and residents alike to stay active. Last spring they began holding regular 5K and 10K walks for residents and staff. The 5K course covers the community campus; the 10K route takes participants through the borough of New Holland.

"We keep offering different fitness challenges to see what clicks for people," she said.

The initiatives are paying off.

"We are seeing more and more people doing things and wanting to be more active," she said. "We have several people who want to do our marathon next March, so we'll help them start training now."

During the first two seasons of The Biggest Loser, participants lost a cumulative total of more than 1,000 pounds. Sixty-seven team members completed the first season, and 61 took part in the second.

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