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Mother-daughter teams making run a tradition

BY BETHANY BUMP
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By the time Lindsay Hafensteiner would get back to the house from her morning run, her 9-year-old daughter was waking up for school.

"She gets up at like 6:30 for school," said the 35-year-old Schenectady woman of her daughter, Kiely. "She was always asking questions about my run and how did it go. Finally, I was like, 'Why don't you come with me?'"

The first time Kiely experienced a competitive race was at last year's annual Freihofer's Run for Women 5K. One of the world's largest all-female road races, it attracts young girls all the way up to elderly women, casual runners and Olympians. It also has begun to attract a good number



At a glance

WHAT: The 34th annual Freihofer's Run for Women 5K.

WHEN: Saturday, 10 a.m. on Madison Avenue between the Empire State Plaza and the State Museum.

REGISTER: Online registration for the 3.1-mile race is open until 5 p.m. today.

MORE INFO: There is an entry cap of 6,000 registrants, but the record was set last year with 4,818 runners.

Run

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of mother-daughter teams.

In fact, Lindsay and Kiely had so much fun last year that they decided to make the run an annual event.

"I grew up in Niskayuna, so I've always been familiar with the Freihofer's," said Lindsay Hafensteiner. "And I thought because it's a race for women, it would be nice if we could do it together from now on."

Last year, more than 300 teams entered the race. Categories include corporate teams, family and friends, high school teams, mother-daughter teams and sister teams. The mother-daughter option is a popular one, with 114 teams competing last year.

The Hafensteiners got an earlier start on training this year because of the mild weather.

Lindsay Hafensteiner is an avid runner, competing in 5Ks, a few half-marathons and even one marathon. But Kiely doesn't really play

any sports, according to her mom. She is, however, quite fast.

"She's got speed," Lindsay Hafensteiner said with a laugh.

They began training in February, going out once or twice a week and starting at a distance of 1 to 1½ miles on the bike path in Niskayuna. Amazingly, Kiely wakes up as early as 5 a.m. some days before school to train with her mom.

"She sets her own alarm," said Lindsay Hafensteiner. "She gets really excited. She gets up and gets dressed. It was pretty amazing to see her be so committed."

Event Director George Regan thinks it's a great bonding opportunity for mothers and daughters; after all, it's a relationship that sees its fair share of stress over the years.

"But when the mom's going out with the daughter and the daughter's going out with the mom and they're doing something that they both love, they're doing something that's healthy," he said.

Regan has seen the number of team competitors grow in recent years. Although running has historically been an individual sport, the world — including athletes — is becoming increasingly social.

But it goes beyond socializing for moms and kids, he said.

"Think about it," said Regan. "The daughter wants the mom to live forever and the mom wants the daughter to have the best life for herself. To be able to do this, both of them are satisfied."

Kiely loved the atmosphere at the Freihofer's Run last year, said her mom. There were vendors, and many family members turned out to cheer her on. It even prompted Lindsay Hafensteiner's own mother to enter the race this year.

Laurene Arsenault is 64 and will be walking, but she wants to see what it's all about, her daughter said.

Several other races are held the same day, including the Junior Freihofer's 3K Run, the 25th annual Freihofer's Kids' Run, the 24th annual Freihofer's Community Walk and the 3K SportWalk. Between noon and 1:30 p.m., there will be several road closures throughout the city.

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