

RUNNING FOR SHELTER

ISLANDERS DO 5K TO BENEFIT VICTIMS OF ABUSE **PAGE 8A**



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ONE GOOD TOURNEY DESERVES ANOTHER

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FILLING GAPS, FIXING PROBLEMS

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cover story



PHOTOS BY LANCE SHEARER / CORRESPONDENT

Caitlyn Schwab and her friend Juan keep up a good pace. Nearly 100 runners and walkers covered five kilometers Saturday morning on Marco Island, in an event benefiting the Shelter for Abused Women and Children in Naples.

Running for shelter

ISLANDERS GO 5K TO BENEFIT VICTIMS OF ABUSE

LANCE SHEARER CORRESPONDENT

Domestic violence, said Christina Nash, is a subject that “needs to be talked about. I want people to be aware of the services the Shelter for Abused Women and Children offers, not just for Naples but for Marco, too.”

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and to mark the observance, Nash organized the “Hands are for Helping” 5K run/walk on Marco Island Saturday morning to raise awareness, and also to raise operating funds for the Shelter (SAW).

The afternoon before the event, 94 participants had signed up, but when the group headed out onto San Marco Road from the Shops of Marco a little after 8 a.m., over 125 turned out for the first-ever Marco Island event.

“This is fantastic, because we’ve never had events for Domestic Violence Awareness Month on Marco Island,” said Kaydee Tuff, communications director for SAW. “Tina wanted to raise awareness about the struggle faced by survivors of domestic violence – it was totally her idea.”

Marco Island City Manager Roger

Hernstadt stood by the registration table as the runners signed in and collected their purple t-shirts, but much like the reporter he spoke to, his flip flops gave him away as a spectator and cheerleader. Local attorney Jessica Hernstadt, Roger’s wife, though, was suited up in running shoes and leotard, ready to run, as well as being a sponsor of the event.

“I have a designated exerciser,” said Roger.

“The Naples shelter is the only one in this area that provides assistance to women who are in dire emergency situations,” said Jessica. “Women come to the shelter with nothing – often with small children.”

Some of the participants at Saturday’s event had small children with them, pushing strollers ahead of them. Ray Trevino had Daniel, 3, along for the ride, and Brian Trtan pushed a tandem stroller holding sons Bryce, 4, and Jackson, 2. Out along Sheffield Avenue, on the return leg, one young woman with her stroller blew by too fast to give her name.

As the participants headed out, it was possible to see the difference between an



Organizer Christina Nash addresses participants before they head out.

organization that has been putting on cross country events for years, and the first-time organizers on Saturday. There was minor confusion at the start, even about just when to start, but everyone got headed off in the right direction. The runners quickly got to the head of the pack, while the walkers went at a slower pace. One young lady realized that, in fact, her hurt leg wasn’t really healed up, and got a ride back to the starting point near the Physicians Regional office from a reporter.

Domestic violence is an issue that strikes close to home, said Linda Oberhaus, executive director of the Shelter for Abused Women and Children in Naples, and too often the victims don’t speak up or take action.

“Domestic violence is the most chronically under-reported crime there is,” she said. The Collier Sheriff’s Office responded to 1,427 cases, the ones that were reported, in 2014, and since 1989, when the Shelter for Abused Women and Children (SAW) was established, they have dealt with over 68,000 victims of abuse.

To mark Domestic Violence Awareness Month, the Shelter is sponsoring additional activities, including a “Purple Flash Mob” at Mercato the evening of October 21. To support the work of the Shelter for Abused Women and Children, a 501(c)3 organization, call the Shelter’s donor relations office at 239-775-3862, or go online to naplesshelter.org.

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KAYDEE TUFF
SAW COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR



The group heads out from the Shops of Marco.