

Fun run uses flower power to raise funds for South Bay foster youth



Participants in the third annual Flower Run 5k are encouraged to wear flower-themed gear to the April 28 fun run/walk. The event at Sunnyvale's Baylands Park raises money for Milpitas-based nonprofit Child Advocates of Silicon Valley. (Photo by Patricia Steele)

By [ANNE GELHAUS](#) | Bay Area News Group

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A group of philanthropically minded Sunnyvale, Cupertino and Los Altos residents are hosting the third annual Flower Run 5k April 28 to raise money for foster children in Santa Clara County.

The 5k fun run/walk starts at 9:30 a.m. at Baylands Park in Sunnyvale. All proceeds from the event benefit Child Advocates of Silicon Valley. The Milpitas-based nonprofit agency recruits, trains and supports Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) who work with children in the foster care system who have suffered abuse and neglect.

ADVERTISING

Last year's Flower Run attracted more than 160 participants and raised nearly \$15,000 for Child Advocates of Silicon Valley. Event co-chair Debbie Crouse says this year's goal is to surpass 200 registered runners.

“We are excited to build on our momentum from last year’s race,” Crouse adds.

As a runner herself, Crouse’s co-chair Joy Erf understands momentum well.

“Running is a passion for me,” says Erf, a Cupertino resident. “Giving back to the community while doing something I love brings that much more meaning to the sport.”

Tim Callahan, an ultra-marathon runner and Sunnyvale resident, will lead off this year’s race.

“Joy Erf is a friend and co-chair of the Flower Run,” Callahan says. “When she asked me to lead off and sweep the run, I was happy to say yes for such a good cause that helps kids in foster care get connected to stable adults through the CASA program.”

In fiscal year 2018, Child Advocates supported approximately 660 CASA volunteers who donated 71,300 hours of time to serve 905 foster children. As a member of the Board of Directors, Debbie Crouse is not only managing the run; she’s also an active volunteer leader in fundraising for the organization.

“We have a strategic plan to serve every foster child in Santa Clara County by 2021,” says Crouse, a member of Child Advocates’ board of directors. “That obviously requires us to increase our operating budget and bring on more CASA volunteers. We depend on the community—both financially and with their volunteer time—to reach these goals. The Flower Run is a fun and healthy way to engage the community.”

Register for the Flower Run at www.run4fosterkids.com. Participants are encouraged to add to the festive atmosphere by wearing flower-themed gear to the event. A 5k finish party features refreshments, booths, runner prizes and a raffle.