



Jim Click Millions Raffle

SAR is participating in the 2024 Jim Click Millions for Tucson raffle! Help support SAR's youth programs by purchasing a raffle ticket bundle (5 tickets for \$100) or a single ticket for \$25. 100% of ticket sale proceeds benefit SAR's FitKidz Racing Series and Children's Fitness Fund.

Our programs facilitate the opportunity for kids to embrace running as a part of a healthy lifestyle while having fun. FitKidz is a children's running club that provides free running opportunities at SAR races for kids (continued on page 2)

The Children's Fitness Fund

By Wayne Lubis

The Children's Fitness Fund was established by SAR in 1991 for the purpose of funding community endeavors that promote life-long fitness for kids. The program focuses on the development of healthy lifestyles for kids with an emphasis on running-related activities. The goal is to prepare kids for a lifetime of exercise, regardless of physical condition or ability. Currently, each SAR race contributes approximately 10% of its profits to the Children's Fitness Fund.

In the fall of 2023 a Children's Fitness Fund grant was made to the Mustang Milers of Senita Valley Elementary School. The Mustang Milers are a running/walking club at Senita Valley - part of the Vail school district. The group is approximately 10 years old, and for the last 4 years has been coached by 4th grade teacher Brandi Sutterley.

The club has 75 members from kindergarten through 5th grade. Outfitted in custom Mustang Miler t-shirts, students meet twice a week from October through March to complete laps around the school track.

Students set a distance goal at the start of the season, and as the year progresses, earn a charm for every 5 miles they complete. The charm is added to a shoelace necklace, which when worn, (continued on page 2)

Jim Click Millions Raffle cont.

12 and under. The Children's Fitness Fund provides grants to schools and other organizations to create and support fitness programs for children. We hope you'll participate and help us to expand these programs to reach more children in the Tucson community.

The Raffle:

- 1st prize is a new 2024 Jeep Wrangler Rubicon 4xe plug-in hybrid vehicle.
- 2nd prize is two round-trip airline tickets to anywhere in the world.
- 3rd prize is \$5,000 cash.

Raffle tickets will be available for purchase online until November 15, 2024. The drawing will be held on December 12, 2024. To purchase tickets and learn more, visit runsar.org/fundraising.



St. Luke's Home

The St. Luke's Home Spring Cross-Country Classic 5K holds a special place on the SAR race calendar. St. Luke's mission is to provide enriching, affordable care and support for residents, ensuring their well-being and participation in an assisted living community. As a nonprofit assisted living community for low-income seniors, St. Luke's has a longstanding history of serving the Tucson community in various ways for over a century. The St. Luke's community plays a crucial role in offering affordable housing solutions for those who may not qualify for state-funded facilities or afford for-profit communities. St. Luke's is proud to bridge this gap and offer a safe and dignified living environment for their residents. To learn more, visit: stlukeshometucson.org.

The Children's Fitness Fund cont.

indicates the number of miles run. The runners celebrate their accomplishments at an end-of-season awards party.

During this school year, club members covered over 2500 miles! Mustang Milers were well represented in the Vail Jingle Trail, Silverbell 5K, and the Vail Pride Day fun run.

The Children's Fitness Fund is just one of the initiatives SAR undertakes on behalf of children's fitness. The FitKidz program aims to improve the health and wellness of our local community by engaging kids and their families in fun and healthy activities. The program encourages all children to come out and run or walk, regardless of their background or experience.

For more information on either of these programs, please visit the SAR website at runsar.org.



Running Connections

By David Abbott

While running is largely a solo pursuit, runners of all stripes create a wide range of communities, from groups of strangers at the starting line or on the course, to students who run for their school's cross-country and track teams, and organized running communities with global reach. Our individual communities can include local running groups, such as the Southern Arizona Roadrunners, Run Tucson, Parkrun or Everyone Runs, or any number of fleeting interactions in weekly groups or long-awaited running events. So, it's only natural that we find unusual or coincidental connections that we didn't expect or could not have imagined.

As a relative newcomer to the Tucson running scene — I returned to the Sonoran Desert in 2019 after 30-plus years away — I didn't really get involved until last year when running calendars returned to pre-pandemic levels. What I knew about local runners was gleaned from checking out results and race photos, so I'm still in the process of getting to know my fellow enthusiasts.

One who I really admire is Billie Lubis, a familiar face in the Tucson running scene who usually leads the pack whenever she's in the field. I assumed she was a Tucson youth who cut her teeth at one of the local high schools, but found I was totally off-base and, as it turns out, we share Midwestern roots.

I recently flew to Kansas City to visit family in Overland Park, Kansas, arriving for the early morning flight to find Billie sitting near the gate for my flight to Denver. Since there was about an hour to kill before boarding — it turned out we were booked on the same flight — I decided to introduce myself and find out more about her.

I was actually surprised that she recognized me and, as it turned out, that was just the first to emerge as we discussed our travel plans. Billie told me she was on her way to Wisconsin for a wedding, and when I told her where I was headed, she shared that she

was from the KC area. When I added Overland Park was my final destination, Billie informed me she grew up a few miles from where my sister has lived for the past 30 years.

Billie moved to Tucson seven years ago. Her parents followed several years later to escape the snow and ice of the Kansas City winters. Her father Wayne volunteers for a number of roles in SAR — and she recently earned her doctoral degree in physics at the University of Arizona. She is also a Kansas University graduate, which resonated with me, as I come from a long line of Jayhawks.

We parted ways prior to boarding, but when we saw each other at TMC Meet Me Downtown in June, it was like we'd known each other for longer than we actually have because of the connections of the past and our brief interaction at the airport.

But that was not the first time I've found unusual connections with a Tucson runner. In 2023, I became a regular participant of Himmel Parkrun, which hosts a lot of transient runners from the U.S. and around the world.

One day last November, I met a man who's a doppelgänger for one of my best and oldest friends. I was shocked at first until I realized it was not my friend but Mike Shiach, a committed, 70-something runner from Washington State who has wintered in Tucson since 2017. In his retirement, Shiach has traveled by RV to Parkrun events chasing milestones and participating in runs all over the country. He's run more than 200 marathons — one in all 50 states — and is now working on 100 half-marathons. It turns out, Shiach and I have run the same events in the past, but that was just the beginning of our connections.

Shiach, his wife Vivian, and his son Ian had a big hand in establishing a Parkrun in Fort Ward, on Bainbridge Island, Washington, and he also participates in the Winthrop Trailhead Parkrun, in Winthrop, Washington.

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Shiach taught me more about the global community fostered by Parkrun, which offers a series of milestones from one's total number of runs, to volunteering milestones, and records for number of different Parkruns visited — all of which can be tracked by third-party apps that allow runners to seek out their corner of the Parkrun community and keep tabs on their own and their friends' achievements.

Shortly after I met Shiach, I checked out the Facebook page for the Winthrop Trailhead Parkrun and found photos of Andy Roth and Elizabeth Boyd, friends I have known for nearly 20 years. Andy was one of my sociology professors at Sonoma State University, who moved to Tucson shortly after I graduated, before returning to California. Eventually, though, the couple relocated to northern Washington to care for aging parents. Andy and Elizabeth were here recently for the Tucson Book Fair and we caught up at Parkrun and took the opportunity to run a few casual miles together. Andy was a big influence on my enthusiasm for running, both as a sport and as a meditative practice, but if not for my participation in Tucson running, we may well have lost touch with each other at this point in our lives. That alone makes me grateful for the community I have embraced here and the activity that keeps me from spending all of my time doom-scrolling or working at my computer.

Social running can provide us with deep, lasting relationships or help us reconnect with old friends or even past versions of ourselves. Running can also offer passing interactions that are satisfying, but do not require deeper commitments, much like having a beer with a perfect stranger at a local watering hole and talking about sports. As a sober runner of eight years, I value those ephemeral relationships nearly as much as the deeper ones that take years to cultivate. No matter where we are in the world or in life, as runners, we have a ready-made community waiting to embrace us, so always remember that even if we run solo, we never run alone.



Beat the Heat... Swim!

By Elle Steiner

Boston winters are cold. I mean COLD. And windy. And dark. And while I would venture out a couple of times a week to brave the elements and get some miles in with my run club, indoor workouts are often the best option.

One winter, back when I was first training for triathlon, I had to learn how to swim competitively. In an effort to jump start my progress, I had the idea to spend one month swimming every day, even if it was only 30 minutes. I made the goal: Swim every day for 30 days. The toasty-warm pool deck in my gym was a nice alternative to mind-numbing miles on the treadmill. But it wasn't easy. There were days when the idea of putting on a swimsuit and getting in the water was the last thing I wanted to do. And there were days when I couldn't find my stroke and I wanted to leave the pool in tears. But I remained consistent for the 30 days. After the swim experiment was over, I stayed consistent, getting to the pool 2-3 days a week to maintain my swim fitness.

Cut to early spring. I was with my run club doing hill repeats in Boston Common, a popular spot for anyone who has ever lived in Boston. It's a long, heart-wrenching hill that parallels Beacon Street, the top of which is located across the street from the State House. After a couple of repeats, I found myself keeping up with one of the faster groups, and one of my buddies turned to me and said, "Wow, you got fast over the winter!"

To my surprise, not only did my winter swim experiment help me to become a better swimmer, apparently it helped me to become a better runner too. So for anyone who is interested in an alternative way to improve your running with some cross training (while escaping the summer heat), I suggest adding a couple of swim workouts to your routine. (continued on page 5)

Whether you are new to swimming as a sport, or thinking about getting back into it, swimming is a fantastic way to get fit. And when the temps hit triple digits, who doesn't want to jump into the pool?

For beginner swimmers, it's easy to get discouraged. Swimming is hard! The thing I've heard most from people just getting into it is that they have to stop and take a break after each lap. That's normal! From your form, to breathing, to pacing, learning to swim for fitness takes time and effort. It may feel overwhelming to try to think about everything at once, so try to concentrate on one thing at a time.

The best way to become a better swimmer is to consistently get in the pool. Make a plan to swim 2-4 times a week, with structured workouts, to help you learn proper swim form, or to get back in the swing of things for former swimmers.

A couple of things to concentrate on:

- **Body Position:** To maintain proper body position, keep your gaze directly towards the bottom of the pool. Your eyes should be looking down, not forward.
- **Hand Entry:** When your hand enters the water, make sure that it is extended out straight, or even a bit wider. This will help avoid "cross over," which is when your hand crosses over the center line of your body to the other side.
- **Arm Position:** After your hand enters the water, keep your arm bent to maximize the amount of water you are pulling. You want to avoid a straight arm in the water.
- **The Kick:** When kicking you want to keep your legs as straight as possible. Don't bend at the knee. Visualize kicking from the hip. And make sure you keep your toes pointed toward the wall behind you; otherwise you'll end up slowing yourself down due to a poor foot position.

Often consistency, more than talent, is what it takes to improve skill, strength and speed. It's about creating a routine and sticking to it. Not only are you training your body, but also your mind.

Time to get into the water!

Most pools are either 25 meters or yards long. While there is a slight difference, these workouts will work either way. So remember, for most pools: 1 pool length = 25 meters/yards. Or you may have access to a 50 meter/yard pool, in which case 1 pool length = 50 meters/yards. Ask the lifeguards at your pool for your pool's details.

Assume all swimming in the workouts is freestyle. Also, I've tried to describe the drills, but feel free to look them up and watch a video to see how they are done properly.

WORKOUT 1

Warm Up

- 5 x 100m as:
 - 50m kick (with a kick board & fins)
 - 50m swim

Main Set

- 100m kick (with a kick board & fins)
- 2 x 100m swim (with swim paddles)
- 300m as: 50m drill followed by 50m swim:
 - Fist drill (swim with your hands in a fist)
 - Finger drag drill (when your hand exits the water, keep your fingers touching the water as you drag them up the side of your body)
 - Catch-up drill (keep one hand in front of you at all times & let the other hand come up to meet it)

WORKOUT 2

Warm Up

- 200m swim (with pull buoy)
- 100m kick (with a kick board & fins)
- 2 x 25m drill/swim (25m drill then 25m swim)
 - Catch-up drill (keep one hand in front of you at all times & let the other hand come up to meet it)

Main Set

- 100m as: [25m fist drill then 25m swim] x 2
- 4 x 50m swim with paddles
- 200m swim with pull buoy





How On Earth Did I End Up Here?

By Kelly Thrush

This question replayed in my mind like a broken record as I sat alone in the hospital room, overwhelmed by confusion, embarrassment, and shame. My relationship with alcohol had destroyed everything I held dear: my marriage, my relationship with my kids, my family ties, and my career. Now, it was killing me.

Lying on the cold, sterile hospital bed, I struggled to process the grim diagnosis: end-stage liver failure. At 38, I never imagined I'd be facing death. I hoped no one would find out where I was. "I can't let them see me like this," I thought.

Just three months earlier, I was in denial about how sick I was. On January 7, 2018, my health began to unravel. By Tuesday, January 9, I was at work when one of my employees asked if I was dying. Embarrassed, I laughed it off. But by Wednesday, my skin and eyes had turned yellow from jaundice. I was still in denial.

Over the next few weeks, I visited several hospitals as my condition worsened. My liver and kidneys were failing, my abdomen filled with fluid, and my skin turned a deeper shade of yellow. My ammonia levels rose, causing delusions and hallucinations. Doctors drained fluid from my abdomen multiple times, but it was only a temporary fix. Specialists told me to get my affairs in order. Jamie refused to

accept this. Thank God for Jamie. She wheeled me out of one specialist's office after he said he couldn't help, determined to find someone who could.

In mid-February, I ended up at a university hospital where I met the team that would eventually save my life. They were uncertain if I could be saved, as a liver transplant seemed to be my only option. The hurdles were significant. First, even if I was put on the transplant list and a liver was found, I might be too sick to survive the surgery. Second, why would a transplant team give a liver to an alcoholic likely to relapse? They needed assurance that I wouldn't squander the second chance they were offering.

Two doctors, in particular, took a chance on me, putting their reputations on the line. They believed in me and convinced the transplant team I was worth the risk.

The day they recovered a liver for me was critical. As they prepped me for surgery, my body began to fail rapidly. I believe my body held on just long enough to hear the news of a liver being found. Jamie stayed by my side, crying as I slipped in and out of consciousness. An ICU nurse told Jamie that if the transplant didn't happen in the next 6-7 hours, I wouldn't make it. I was no longer just dying—I was actively dying.

When I woke up after surgery, the flood of emotions was indescribable. Hooked up to countless tubes and machines, I felt overwhelming gratitude. I had made it. I had immense gratitude for the doctors, the transplant team, and my family, who stood by my bedside with tears and smiles. But this gratitude was accompanied by immense guilt. My poor choices had almost killed me and caused untold pain to my loved ones. (continued on page 7)



The road to recovery was tough. I needed multiple procedures post-transplant and battled infections. I was weak, needing a walker or wheelchair to move around. With round-the-clock care, I started to regain my strength.

Initially, my goals were small. Walking to the mailbox became my first challenge. Gradually, I extended my walks, reaching a point where I could walk around the block. Just weeks after surgery, I insisted on taking the stairs instead of the ramp during a family outing, much to Jamie's dismay. But I needed to prove to myself that I could do it. Each small victory felt monumental.

I found solace in hiking, drawn to the mountains for both physical and mental health benefits. The solitude of nature became part of my mindfulness practice. Hikes grew longer and more challenging as I pushed myself further.

In October 2018, I hiked to the top of a ridge line and called my sister to share the view. She suggested running a half marathon with her. Initially, I thought it was impossible, but then I realized I had just hiked 14 miles. The next day, I signed up for my first half marathon.

In the summer of 2020, I discovered how truly life-changing running can be. I joined Southwest Endurance Training without knowing anything about them. Now, this community includes some of my very best friends. It has led me to crazy adventures, running with friends on trails. This year's goals are to run 100 miles at the Javelina Jundred in October, and next April, I aim to tackle the Arizona Monster—310 miles on the AZT from Patagonia to Superior. It's going to be epic.

I made a promise to myself and my family: I would earn this gift of life every day. I would respect my body, take it on adventures, and honor the memory of my donor. I would support others on their transplant journeys, mentor those struggling with addiction, and be the man Jamie and my kids could be proud of. Jamie and I began the Gratitude and Grace Foundation, our little nonprofit providing community and financial support for transplant recipients and their families, as well as for people recovering from Substance Abuse Disorder. We are very proud of this endeavor. While still in the infancy stages, we plan on big things to come. You can learn more about us at gratitudeandgracefoundation.org.

People say I've changed, and maybe they're right. But more importantly, I've embraced transformation. I am living proof that even from the deepest despair, one can rise, not only to reclaim their life but to live it more fully and authentically than ever before. This journey is my tribute to the person who gave me a second chance, to Jamie's unwavering love, and to the countless people who believed in me when I couldn't believe in myself. I will continue to earn this gift, every single day, for the rest of my life.



2024-2025 SAR SCHEDULE

- September 2, 2024 Saguaro National Park Labor Day 8M* & 5K run/walk
- September 8, 2024 TMC Tucson 10K* & 5K
- September 28, 2024 Sabino Canyon 1M FitKidz Classic
- October 13, 2024 Jim Click's Run 'n' Roll 5K* & 1M
- October 20, 2024 TMC Get Moving Tucson 1/2 Marathon,* 4M & FitKidz Mile
- November 28, 2024 Thanksgiving Cross-Country Classic 5K* & 1.5M run/walk
- January TBD, 2025 Sun Run: La Primera 5K/10K* & FitKidz Mile
- January TBD, 2025 Beyond Saguaro National Park West 4M & 1M run/walk
- February TBD, 2025 SAR RANnual Celebration
- February TBD, 2025 Fine Valentine Relay 4M & 2M & FitKidz Mile
- February 16, 2025 TMC Old Tucson Trail Run 4M* & 1M
- March TBD, 2025 Dave's Run for ALS 8K* & FitKidz & Family Mile
- March 22, 2025 St. Luke's Home Spring Cross-Country Classic 5K* & FitKidz Mile

* Grand Prix Race

About SAR

The Southern Arizona Roadrunners is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting health and fitness in Tucson and Southern Arizona through running and walking.

Our vision is to strengthen and support the running and walking community in Southern Arizona through high-quality, affordable, and family-friendly events and programming that empower people of all backgrounds, abilities, and ages to pursue a healthier lifestyle. We promote community engagement by celebrating the joy of athletic achievement, individual and group participation, philanthropy, and volunteer service.



For the latest information, visit us online at runsar.org
You can also follow us on Facebook and Instagram at:
[@azroadrunners](https://www.facebook.com/azroadrunners) & [@runsar](https://www.instagram.com/runsar)

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