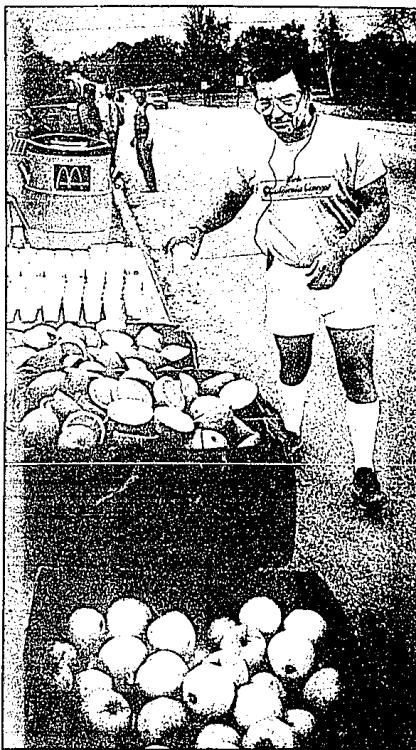


Hoofing it: They took to road to battle birth defects



Ed Skone of Canton Township mans a checkpoint, where apples, oranges and drinks were made available to all participants.

Photos by C.D. Stouffer

By Bob Sklar
staff writer

MORE THAN 1,400 people — the young to the young at heart — hoofed it for up to 18½ miles around Farmington Hills Sunday to help raise money to fight birth defects. Local WalkAmerica pledge topped \$173,700.

Walker and pledge totals were down slightly from last year, but Larry Morgan, March of Dimes Southeast Michigan Chapter executive director, said he was delighted nonetheless.

Participants could walk as much or as little as they wanted. They had eight hours to complete the 30-kilometer course. They enlisted sponsors to pledge a specified amount of money per kilometer walked.

"Things went just beautifully," Morgan said. "We had volunteer podiatrists, first-aid stations and transport vans at every checkpoint, but the only problems reported were a few blisters. It was cool enough when we started, but it got hot."

About 7,000 walkers at 10 locations throughout metro Detroit last weekend raised \$700,000 in pledges for the March of Dimes Southeast Michigan Chapter — about the same as last year.

OAKLAND COUNTY walkers started from Oakland Community College's Orchard Ridge campus in Farmington Hills.

Team entries included a 12-member contingent from IDS Financial Services, whose shirt-clad team raised \$1,000, which matched what IDS teams that walked in Detroit and Ann Arbor brought in. That brought the Farmington Hills-based company's fund-raising total to \$3,000.

Clawson resident Cynthia McClure, an IDS personal financial planner, pushed for a team entry and did much of the organizing.

"She came to IDS about a year ago from ATT, where she walked for the March of Dimes," said team member Terry Iwasaki of South Lyon. "She was really excited about us participating. She was excited about helping others reach fund-raising goals, much like we strive to help clients attain investment goals."

Iwasaki and Novi resident Eric Trubacs were the two members to walk 30 kilometers.

IDS support stretched from division manager Dennis Koczara of Farmington Hills to corporate headquarters in Minneapolis. "Everybody pitched in," Iwasaki said. "We're already looking forward to a bigger team and a better showing next year."

THE MARCH of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation supports medical research into the causes and prevention of birth defects, the nation's leading child health problem. Research sites include Wayne State University, the University of Michigan and Hutzel Hospital.

The foundation also supports community education and outreach programs and funds support groups and programs across southeast Michigan.

More than 250,000 infants are born with birth defects each year in the United States — one of every 14 infants born. Another half-million potential lives are destroyed by miscarriages and still births every year, largely because of faulty fetal development.

Nationally last year, WalkAmerica fund-raising topped \$39.8 million.

'Everybody pitched in. We're already looking forward to a bigger team and a better showing next year.'

— Terry Iwasaki,
IDS employee



Checkpoint card stampers run alongside joggers Laurie Lash (left) of Concord, N.H., and Sue Kortmann of Troy.

VIC TANNY

THEIR EXTRAS CAN'T BEAT OUR STANDARD EQUIPMENT.

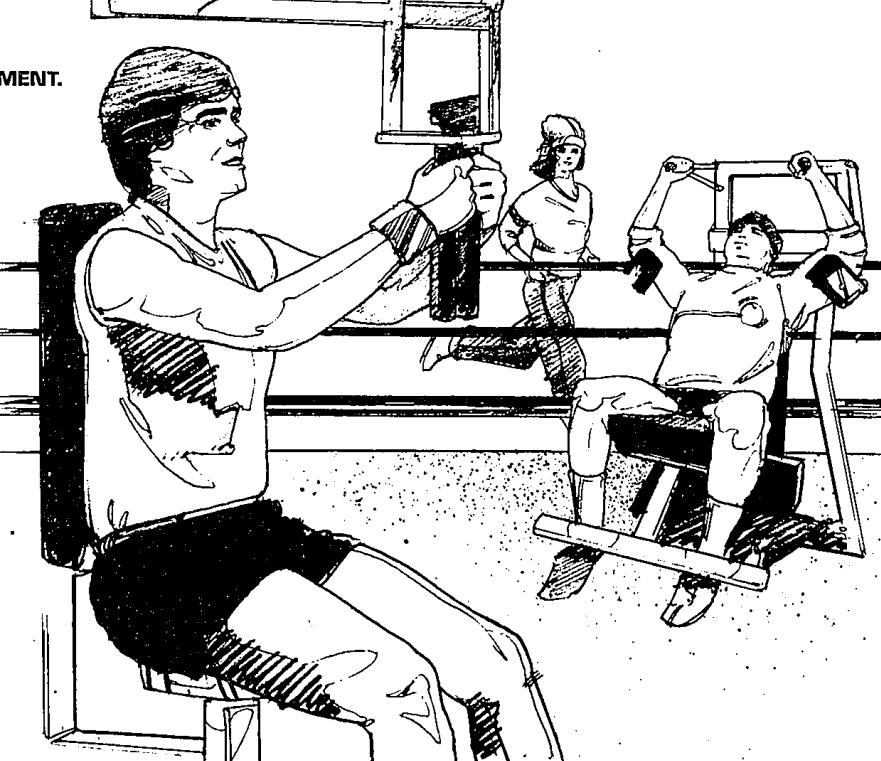
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