

Column hopes to reach runner's spirit inside you

Runners have their own story and reasons for being on the road or trails.

Some run to lose weight or to tone their bodies. Some run in groups for the camaraderie or alone to clear their minds. Others train for personal records and some just for fun. Whatever your reasons, the sport of running is inclusive, universal and accessible.

You don't even need shoes or clothes (although they are highly recommended) to participate. Most of all running is fun and, if you disagree, my goal through these series of articles is to change your mind. I aim to educate, enlighten, motivate, and inspire those who already run and those who have not yet discovered their inner runner. Trust me, that runner is there, yearning to be set free. So I invite all of you to come out and join me in this fulfilling activity in the beautiful terrain of Ahwatukee Foothills.

Running is my passion. I have been running in one form or another since junior high. I have run when happy, sad, to mark special occasions and many times I have run just because I love the time when I am outside with the sun in my face, my yellow lab Mylo at my heels, my mind unclouded, and my thoughts unfettered.

It is my love of the sport that inspired me to start my own running coaching company. Through this regular series of articles covering nutrition, safety, injury prevention, motivation and more, I hope to share my running stories and inspire not only the runner, but educate the com-



Runner's Rap

by Ronda Jameel

munity and motivate others to start running and enable you to run injury free and safely.

Why did I choose the sport of running? Initially I joined the track team in high school because of the cute guys on the team. I chose to be a sprinter because I didn't have to run farther than 400 meters, but still got to travel around the state to meets. However, that all changed in college and I was hooked on endurance and distance running after winning my very first 5-kilometer race in 1993.

Since then I have finished numerous races ranging from 5k's to marathons, as well as some triathlons and duathlons. I placed third in the 1996 Tucson marathon, and Mylo and I took second place in the 2004 Dog-n-Jog Furry Fun Run.

So what's my background? I graduated from Southeast Missouri State University with a bachelor's degree in health promotion and wellness, and am a graduate of the University of Phoenix with a master's in business administration in health care management. I am also a certified running coach, personal trainer, group exercise specialist, certified yoga instructor, and am CPR and first aid certified. I have served as a coach for the Phoenix Fit marathon training program and am currently the wellness program manager of a major corporation, a track coach for

beginner to intermediate adults and guest speaker for several marathon training teams sponsored by Valley organizations.

In 2006 I started my company, Run2Dend, because of my special interest in beginning runners, believing that with the right coaching anyone can discover the hidden runner within. As I surveyed the running coaching landscape, I discovered a void in beginner-specific coaching in the shorter distances and decided to apply my years of experience in developing programs specifically for beginner to intermediate runners.

Stay tuned for next month's column and, in the meantime, step outside and enjoy this beautiful weather. See you on the trails.

Ahwatukee Foothills resident Ronda Jameel is a certified running coach and owner of Run2Dend. Check out training programs for upcoming races at www.run2dend.com. Questions about running can be e-mailed to questions@run2dend.com.