



Contact:

Lisa Knapp
(818) 952-2227

Putting Their Best Foot Forward:

Verdugo Hills Hospital Fitness Team completes \$50,000 fund-raising marathon

(GLENDALE, CA – September 1, 2006) — The 16 members of the Verdugo Hills Hospital Fitness Team returned to work this week a little bit sore and tired but in high spirits after completing the Marathon Des Duex Rives in Quebec, Canada, on Sunday, August 27.

For most team members, who spent 10 weeks working out at the Rose Bowl every Saturday with professional trainer Robert Mills, it was their first time taking part in a race of any length.

Some team members walked or ran - or did a combination of both - in the 13.1-mile half-marathon while others took on the full 26.2-mile-long marathon. Everyone finished the course and the more experienced marathoners walked – and ran – away with personal best times.

It was the first time the hospital had put together a marathon team, said Margaret Kean, president of the Verdugo Hills Hospital Foundation, and the event was very successful. All the funds raised toward the team's \$50,000 goal will help fund hospital programs and services.

“It really was a lot of fun,” Kean said. “Everyone finished the race, several beat their personal records, and our first-timers had a ball. At the end of the day, there was a lot of celebration and laughter to accompany our sore muscles. It was worth all the hard work.”

Robert Pickett, clinical director of the Intensive Care Unit and one of the first-timers, walked most of the 13.1 mile half-marathon. He completed the course in three hours and 40 minutes.

“I wanted to take part in the race because of the health benefits and because of the opportunity to travel to Canada,” Pickett said. “I was just glad to be able to finish the race without injuring myself. The last three miles were the hardest because you think you are close to the end but the course just seems to drag on and on and it's when you start to feel tired.”

Monica Maldonado, the hospital's event consultant, volunteered to be a part of the team because she wanted to do something to mark the milestone of her 50th birthday this year.

“I’ve never been a competitor, and I’ve never run in a marathon before,” Maldonado said. “It was definitely a personal highlight for me to be able to finish the race, and it was wonderful to have everyone cheering you on just as you were crossing the line. I’ll never forget it.”

Maldonado ran the half-marathon and completed the course in two hours and 29 minutes. Inspired by her performance, she now plans to run another 10 km marathon later this year.

The Verdugo Hills Hospital Fitness Team included President and CEO Leonard LaBella, who ran his personal best, Michael Berman, Debra Brown, Sandi Davis, Shirley Ip, Margaret Kean, Amy Lee, Mark Lueken, Monica Maldonado, Ruth McNevin, Veronica Malgoza, Dee Monroy, Ali Peerzada, Robert Pickett, Jan Yuo M.D., and Delia Zamora. Online donations can still be made at www.vhhospital.org/foundation_how_marathon_runner_start.asp or by calling the Verdugo Hills Hospital Foundation office at (818) 952-2226.



Picture Caption: The Verdugo Hills Hospital Fitness Team relaxes in Quebec after completing the Marathon Des Deux Rives.

Verdugo Hills Hospital is a 158-bed nonprofit primary care facility nestled in the foothills between Glendale and La Cañada Flintridge. The hospital features all private rooms, 24-hour emergency services, comprehensive inpatient and outpatient diagnostic and treatment facilities, and a family birthing center. It is the only independent, freestanding hospital in the greater Foothill communities and was voted the “Foothills’ Best” hospital by the readers of the *Glendale News-Press* and *Foothill Leader* for the past three consecutive years. For more information, visit www.vhhospital.org.