

## RUNNING FOR A CAUSE REACHES 15 YEARS MILESTONE

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PHOTOS PROVIDED BY FLYING PIG MARATHON 2013

Running for a cause is without a doubt the heart of the Flying Pig Marathon. Since the marathon began in 1998, the heartbeat – runners participating in the yearly, weekend marathon events and activities to support a variety of causes – just keeps getting stronger and better.

Held annually on the first Sunday of May, the heartbeat in 2013 was stronger than ever with a record number of participants taking part in the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Flying Pig Marathon weekend.

Heightened security nor race changes resulting from the 2013 Boston Marathon tragedy didn't dampen spirits or adversely affect runner participation. Representing all 50 U.S. states and 16 countries, there were 33,852 participants signed up for the event weekend.

"It was great, great enthusiasm along the course, there were a lot of Boston supporters and that was just really encouraging," said Sergio Reyes, of Palmdale, California, who won the 26.2 miles 2013 Flying Pig Marathon (Men's Division). With his victory, the 31-year-old Reyes, who also won in 2009 and 2012, is the first to win the Flying Pig event three times.



***The 15th Flying Pig Marathon drew a record number of registered participants—33,852—to the weekend of events.***

Photo | Flying Pig Marathon 2013

"This is one of my favorite races; it's almost a home town race for me." said Reyes.

More than a race, the Flying Pig Marathon, a qualifier for the Boston Marathon and the 17th largest U.S. running festival, is also a fundraiser for charity. With more than 200 charities using the Cincinnati Flying Pig Marathon as a fundraiser – from manning water stops to sponsoring runners who raise money through pledges, charities and non-profits that use the Marathon as a major fundraiser have raised more than \$1 million for their respective organi-

zations. While the pledges for 2013 are still coming in and the final total to be tallied, the Marathon has helped raise more than \$10 million in the event's first 14 years to benefit Tri-State charities.

"This is our third time to be a partner charity." Randie Marsh, Executive Director of SOTENI International, shares by phone with AboutGreaterCincinnati.com. "We have had people run for us before. This year with Paul being a part of our team [Team SOTENI -Kilometers for Kenya], he just generated and created excitement..."

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## RUNNING FOR A CAUSE REACHES 15 YEARS MILESTONE (CONT'D)



(left—right) Some of the Flying Pig event winners: Chelsea Koglmeier of Cincinnati (Toyota 10K—Womens); Paul Odipo (Toyota 10K—Mens); Rebecca Walter of Bloomington, Indiana (Full Marathon—Womens); Sergio Reyes (Full Marathon—Mens).

Photos | Flying Pig Marathon 2013

Marsh is referring to Paul Sienda Odipo, a 38 year old runner who travelled from Kenya to run in the Flying Pig. Odipo participated to help raise money and increase awareness for SOTENI International, a Cincinnati-based non-profit that works to reduce the incidence of HIV/AIDS and implement sustainable solutions to improve the lives of those affected by the disease in rural Kenya. With the 2013 Flying Pig being his first U.S. marathon and coming to Cincinnati his first time in the U.S., Odipo won the Toyota 10K (Men's Division) of the Flying Pig events and placed 7<sup>th</sup> in the Flying Pig full marathon (Men's Division).

"Marathon run was good..." Odipo shares in an email with AboutGreaterCincinnati.com. "I would love to come back next year and run the flying pig again

and possibly invite some of my fellow Kenyan runners."

The Flying Pig Marathon weekend, which has a variety of events for walkers, runners as well as all ages and abilities, saw 101 runners, known as the Flying Pig Streakers, continue their 15<sup>th</sup> straight year of participation in the full marathon race. To attract new participants, excite seasoned Flying Pig marathoners, keep the weekend of events relevant and appealing, and honor the 2013 milestone anniversary, organizers of the "Pig" held a number of new community initiatives including the Little Kings Mile Race, a free concert by national recording artists Foxy Shazam, and a Spectator Brunch. Yearly, more than 5,000 volunteers make the Marathon run smoothly.

So, it's no surprise that participants – runners, walkers, chari-

ties, spectators, sponsors, volunteers - are already making plans for the 16th running of the Cincinnati Flying Pig Marathon weekend to be held May 2-4, 2014.

"... we're definitely planning to participate in 2014's Flying Pig!" shares Linda Walker, Development and PR Associate for Mercy Neighborhood Ministries (MNM). A partner charity raising funds through the Flying Pig for the past 7 years, MNM empowers individuals and families through programs that address immediate needs, foster self-reliance, promote holistic health, and advocate for social justice.

"Those who took part in this year's Flying Pig encouraged those who didn't," remarked Linda Walker about Team MNM, "so I think next year we'll have an even bigger turn-out."

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