

FRANKLY SPEAKING



St. Paul Spirit Run 5K
March 8
9:00 AM
Valparaiso, IN

Runnin' With the Irish
5K
March 15
9:00 AM
Chesterton, IN

LaPorte YMCA 10K/5K
March 22
9:00 AM
LaPorte, IN

STRIDER EVENT SCHEDULE:

Gold Cup Banquet
January 25

I hope everyone has and is surviving the winter weather while keeping their fitness levels up.

It is challenging to get your running in. I really do not have a lot to say this month since running season has been in hibernation, so to speak, with the wintry weather. However, it soon will be racing season again. With that I urge everyone to begin getting in shape and their bodies ready to endure the miles it takes each of us to get ready to race. Our first Gold cup race will be here before we know it. So, with that, I will say no more except..

Gotta Run!!

Time to get my butt in racing shape too and I will see you at the races!!

Thanks for your Time!

FRANK



STRIDERS IN THE NEWS

A LaPorte County Life that Matters: Elena Lancioni
 written by *Donna Seeley* on www.laportecountylife.com,
 November 20, 2013

Every time I speak with **Elena Lancioni** I walk away with a smile on my face. She is such a pleasant young lady who is very giving of her time and always very upbeat. At age **18** she has been running more than **10** years!

When asked who it was who got her started running, she said it was her dad. He dragged her out to a **5k** when she was in second grade! She believes she won her first award when she was in **6th** grade; winning her age group in the Sunflower 5k, in **La Porte**. She's won her age group many times since!

Her middle school cross country career started out kind of rocky. She said her mom told her at the end of that first year that maybe cross country wasn't the sport for her! Imagine that... but she hung in there and did better in seventh grade and started to really enjoy it in eighth grade. Coming in third at the **State Meet** this year in **Terre Haute** and being able to run with her team (who placed **10th** in the State) was her biggest accomplishment. Earlier in the season she had remarked that she had been looking forward to running with a team in Terre Haute and not as an individual. She runs between **45-50** miles a week and started getting serious in **High School** adding more winter running into her training program.

Her favorite race outside of the regular **Cross Country Circuit** is the **Footlocker**.

"I like the course and it's later in the season. It's cooler in November and nice to have that race as the last race of the season," Lancioni said.

Her choice for college is **Bowling Green University**, where she will major in **Exercise Science**. Her reasons for choosing Bowling Green were simply because she felt happiest there. It was a good fit with the girls and the team and felt she could make a difference there.

She hasn't thought about serious goals for track this coming **Spring**. She runs the **3200, 1600, 800** and sometimes the **4x4** relay.

"Right now I'd like to break 5 in the mile and 11 in the 2 mile," she said.

One of the things she treasures the most are the friends she has met at the different races over the years. She has gotten many phone numbers and still keeps in touch with many of her peers throughout her career. Elena collected a few more this weekend as she represented Indiana in the **Mideast Cross Country** meet. The top senior runners from **Indiana, Michigan, Ohio** and **Illinois** competed in Ohio where Elena placed 5th overall to lead the Indiana girls to grab the first place honors.

Waverly Neer and **Lauren Fleshman** are mentors she looks up to. Lauren Fleshman is just coming back to running after having a baby.

"She ran at Stanford and I remember watching her run in the Olympic Trials. Her journal is very insightful and she is very motivational," Lancioni said.

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As for school, her favorite subject is **Spanish** and particularly enjoys her yearbook teacher **Ms. Parker**.

"Ms Parker is very enthusiastic and encouraging not just to her own students but to everyone," Lancioni said. "She is a good friend to everyone and likes to make a difference. She started a Kindness Campaign in the school and everyone is joining to make the school better. She supports the students and has even come to a few of my meets."

In her spare time Elena likes anything having to do with the outdoors. She also likes to bake. The Lancioni family sponsored a foreign exchange student giving both Elena and her sister Lauren (who is 15) some great memories from a great experience. She likes to volunteer when she can. She ran with Girls on the Run a couple weeks ago, but most practices are the same times as mine so I didn't get to do as much as I would have liked. She has a dog named **Rocky** and a cat named **Bullwinkle**.

When asked what people wouldn't know about her, she replied, "That I write in cursive all the time, most people print a lot more but I always do cursive."

When asked what she would like people to know about her, she replied, "That I'm a friendly person. That I am always willing to be someones friend."

I guess that about sums it up for why Elena Lancioni is a **Life that Matters**

Schererville woman to ride on Rose Parade float

by Vanessa Renderman on www.nwitimes.com, December 15, 2013

SCHERERVILLE | Viewers who tune in for the Rose Parade at 10 a.m. on New Year's Day may see a familiar face among the mums and marigolds.

Linda Ramos, of Schererville, will ride on the Donate Life America float, slated as 15th in the parade lineup.

An advocate for organ donation and a pancreas and eye tissue recipient, the 46-year-old occupational therapy assistant is excited she was chosen to ride the float.

"I cried," she said.

She thought she was meeting with local Donate Life representatives to talk about an outreach and education effort she wants to initiate.

"They said, 'Will you represent us in the Rose Bowl parade?'" she said. "I really had no idea."

Ramos, along with her husband, daughter and daughter's friend, will fly to California on Dec. 28. They will help decorate the float, watch float judging and attend a gala.

"I'm going to practice my wannabe-Homecoming queen wave," she said.

The float will be adorned with photos of deceased organ and tissue donors. The people who will ride on the float are organ recipients, and those walking alongside will be living organ and tissue donors, Ramos said.

For the 2014 Donate Life Rose Parade Float, organizers chose to honor and recognize solely transplant recipients as float riders, which they have not done before, said Tony Sullivan, spokesman for Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network.

Those on the float usually are donor family members or a mix of recipients and donor family members, he said.

"As a pancreas and sclera (eye tissue) transplant recipient and an active volunteer for us who strongly advocates for organ and tissue donation by selflessly sharing her story, Linda was a perfect fit," Sullivan said.

She was selected for her "courage, service and advocacy" in light of the transplants she received, he said.

"Linda is and has been a very active Advocates for Hope volunteer for us in the Northwest Indiana area for many years," Sullivan said.

Ramos' health story goes back to when she was 16 and diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes. Although difficult to control, she managed it for 15 years.

"It wasn't until my pregnancy at 31 that everything started to spiral out of control," she said.

She suffered congestive heart failure and kidney failure while pregnant. She went into labor early in an ordeal that gave her and her infant daughter only a 50 percent chance of survival. Her daughter spent three months in a neonatal intensive care unit, and Ramos began to recover from the conditions that came up during pregnancy.

"Two months after bringing her home, I found my retinas were detaching," she said.

Doctors warned her she could go blind.

"That was my first experience with organ donation," she said.

Using donated tissue, doctors "buckled" down her left eye and stabilized the other through laser treatment. Thinking the worst was behind her, Ramos soon developed hypoglycemia unawareness, which means her body did not give her signals when her blood sugar was low.

She couldn't walk or drive.

"At the time, I was losing all my independence," she said.

Deemed as suffering from a life-threatening condition, she was put on a list to receive a pancreas. About two years later, she had the surgery, and her health improved drastically. She no longer has diabetes.

When Ramos received a second chance at life, she took off running. In the last four years, she has run 55 races and is involved with the Calumet Region Striders.

"I feel great," she said. "Better than I ever could have imagined. When you feel good every day, you take that for granted. Once I started feeling good, it was amazing. I said, 'I can't believe people feel like this every day.'"

She is involved in her daughter's life, to the extent a high school girl allows her mother to hang around.

"I wanted to be an actively engaged mom," she said, rattling off a host of parental leadership roles she has claimed, including assistant softball coach and room mom.

"When I was diabetic, I didn't have the energy," she said. Ramos has not taken insulin since the day she woke up after the pancreas transplant.

"My organ is doing great," she said.

She has blood work done every three months, and she takes immunosuppression medication to trick her body into thinking the donated pancreas is hers from birth.

That process makes her more susceptible to infections and viruses. But, Ramos said she never gets sick.

She and another transplant recipient host a transplant support group that meets at 6 p.m. the third Wednesday of the month in the conference center at St. Mary Medical Center in Hobart.

She encourages people to register as organ and tissue donors.

"It's all about education," Ramos said. "Everything I do is to bring awareness. I have a happy ending. My story is great. There's 120,000 people just like me who have stories just like me, as compelling as mine. And they deserve a happy ending."

Indiana residents can register at www.donatelifelifeindiana.org, and Illinois residents can register at www.giftofhope.org.

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ROMANTIC GIFTS FOR RUNNERS

FROM *RUNNING.ABOUT.COM* BY *CHRISTINE LUFF*, NOVEMBER 16, 2013

Runners are usually easy to buy gifts for because we love practical items. Just browse on running gear websites or shop in any running store and you can find a new article of clothing or running gear item that we'll gush over. But Valentine's Day gifts are another story because -- even among runners -- there's that underlying expectation that the gift be romantic or, at least, very thoughtful. Here are some ideas that go beyond the usual technical running shirt or winter running hat:

- 1. Trip to a Runner-Friendly Destination** If your running sweetie likes surprises, how about planning a relaxing getaway to a place where you know she'd love to run? It could be as simple as an overnight stay at a spa, inn, or B&B near some great running trails.
- 2. Massage Gift Card** Runners work hard, but they also love to relax and be pampered. A massage is a great way to help runners recharge their batteries and also prevent injuries. If you're on a tight budget and can't afford a foot massage from you. Inexpensive massages are also frequently featured on deal sites like Groupon or Living Social, so check those sites for bargains in your area.
- 3. Runners' Jewelry** Check out sites such as finishlinecharms.com for necklaces, bracelets, and other jewelry that can be personalized with names, races, distances, or times. And don't assume this gift idea only works for women. If your man isn't into wearing jewelry, you can also find other personalized items such as cuff links and key rings.
- 4. Pedicure Gift Certificate** With issues like black toenails and blisters, runners' feet tend to get somewhat, er, unattractive looking. So a pedicure is another excellent (and budget-friendly) pampering idea for your favorite runner. And, yes, even men can enjoy a little pampering by getting their toenails trimmed and feet rubbed by a professional.
- 5. Safety Gear** Letting your significant other know that you want him or her to be safe while running is a great way to show that you care. She'll consider that reflective vest or head-lamp a romantic gesture!
- 6. Finisher's Keepsake** If your significant other recently ran a big race, such as a marathon, he may not have wanted to splurge on the pricey finish line photos. Or he may be too modest to admit that he'd secretly *love* to have a framed photo of his marathon finish. So he'd appreciate it if someone else decided to do it for him. Go to the race website, order a photo, and put it in a nice frame. If you're feeling really creative, you could even get a shadowbox and put the photo, medal, finishers' bib, and any other race mementos in it.

A RRCA Member Running Club serving
Northwest Indiana & Northeast Illinois for 30 years

Check Out Our Site: WWW.CALSTRIDER.ORG