

# Hoy

## Young Angelino will run the Los Angeles Marathon after losing almost 100 pounds



Jennifer Martinez (center) will run with Students Run LA the Los Angeles Marathon after losing almost 100 pounds.

The stage of adolescence is considered by the great majority as the most difficult of the human being. During this period, young people exhibit hormonal and physical changes that affect their behavior in some way.

Depression may sometimes be a result of these changes. Jennifer Martinez, a 17-year-old teenager, lived it firsthand.

"I was very depressed and drank a lot. I could not find an end to when I drank. There were times when I felt that I would lose consciousness and say everything that bothered me. I drank a lot and soon started to use drugs too," said Martinez, whose puberty was affected by depression and caused an overweight increase of more than 100 pounds than what is considered normal for her build.

According to Martínez, between the ages of 13 and 14, the depression began due to hormonal issues. However, her situation worsened by the separation of her parents. She tried to deal with everything in any way possible.

"I had therapies, I went to see a psychiatrist. I did not want to take the medication because I saw that it really did not help and many people got worse. During that time I went to many meetings and parties in houses,

which served alcohol and there were young minors," recalled the daughter of Mexicans. "I drank a lot and that contributed to making me very overweight, I was at 240 pounds."

The website Mental Health America explains that every year almost 5,000 young adolescents, who suffer from a certain type of depression, between 15 and 24 years commit suicide. A number that has tripled since 1960.

In 2015, Alejandra, a friend of Martinez invited her to be part of a group of runners to help her change the lifestyle she had.

"I wanted to lose weight and I knew that running would help me lose it," recalled the Avance Charter School student from Los Angeles. "In the first month I noticed a quick change and that's when I thought I should push myself."

The process of change of Martinez was not easy because he had to leave her activities that were harming her health and away from bad influences. She also had to adopt a lot of discipline in order to fulfill her goal of running marathons.

"I started running last year with Students Run LA (SRLA)," said Martinez, who was then pre-diabetic. "I wanted to lose weight and I got into the program. I also wanted to be part of a team. My friend Alejandra went first but I was lazy (laughs).

Martinez lost a lot of weight before running her first Los Angeles Marathon in 2016. However, despite meeting that goal, the angelino struggled to be consistent throughout the race and now looks to this weekend to better finish at 26.2 Miles from the Marathon.

To achieve this new task, Martinez showed more dedication and seriousness in training leaving aside the parties on weekends. Although she lost 100 pounds, her weight remains around 150.

"When you feel stuck, there are always ways to get out of that situation. Whatever it is, there is always an outlet for something better," Martinez told HOY Deportes.

### **The guide in the dark**

Martinez had the support of David Zamudio, a former teacher of her in seventh grade and who now guides her in SRLA.

"We put her into a nutrition, education program, where we teach them how to prepare for a career. Already stopped going out on weekends because she would arrive tired to training and little by little took it seriously," explained Zamudio.

The coach explained that apart from the depression and the family moment that Martinez lived, the environment of the runner also affected her. Zamudio believes that Martínez is better prepared to face this new challenge that represents more than a race.

In her first participation in the Marathon, she completed the race in six hours and 45 minutes and expects Sunday to do it in five and a half hours.

"She has almost two years of transformation of her body. This Marathon would be like a culmination to its cycle of change ", said Zamudio.

## **The Race**

On Sunday

Home: Dodger Stadium, Los Angeles

End: Intersection of Ocean Ave and California Ave, Santa Monica

Time and division:

6:30 a.m. - Wheelchairs

6:42 am - Bicycles of hands

6:45 am - Women

6:55 am - Men

Awards for Women and Men: 1. \$ 23,000, 2. \$ 11,250, 3. \$ 9,000, 4. \$ 4,500, and \$ 2,250.

- In addition, the first three in each division and in their respective ages will receive a commemorative prize.

- All participants who finish the race will receive a commemorative medal.