



NEWS RELEASE

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STUDENTS RUN LA'S JOURNEY TO THE MARATHON CONTINUES AT THE SRLA 18-MILE FRIENDSHIP RUN

- *Nearly 4,000 runners tackle the ultimate test in their training for the Skechers Performance Los Angeles Marathon, 18 miles at Hansen Dam -*

LOS ANGELES, Calif. – Feb 19, 2019 – Students Run LA (SRLA) will be hosting the 24th Annual SRLA 18-mile Friendship Run presented by Richard and Federica Lewis at Hansen Dam in Pacoima on Sunday, February 24. This race will bring together over 3,000 at-risk middle and high school students who participate in SRLA's youth mentoring and marathon training program. Students train to complete the Skechers Performance Los Angeles Marathon alongside more than 500 volunteer teachers who lead the program at 185 schools and community programs across the region.

"This is the final race on our students' journey to the 26.2-mile marathon," said Marsha Charney, Executive Director of SRLA. "Our 30th season has been full of surprises, including our first race cancellation in 30 years, a teachers' strike, and flooding which changed our 18-mile course, but that has not stopped our students from training hard since September. This race will be a final milestone before the Marathon, proving to our runners that they have put in the hard work necessary to get to the big day."

In addition to running, SRLA students will also participate in a community service project: "Pasta to Make a Difference!" Students collect pasta at their schools that will be donated to MEND, a local food bank in Pacoima

SRLA began when a local continuation high school teacher, Harry Shabazian, from East LA completed the first City of Los Angeles Marathon. Feeling personally transformed, Harry challenged his students, who were struggling both in school and life, to train with him for the next Los Angeles Marathon and change their lives as well. The half dozen students who did so not only finished the marathon, but also finished high school and went on to college and jobs.

One of these original students, Lulu Rojas, is now a teacher who leads the SRLA program at Downtown Value Magnet High School.

SRLA now reaches more than 3,250 middle and high school students each year across Greater Los Angeles. In 2018, SRLA brought 2,746 students to the starting line of the Marathon, and over 99% successfully crossed the finish line.

“Completing a marathon is a life-changing experience,” said Ms. Charney. “As our students tell us, ‘If I can complete a marathon, I can do anything!’ But SRLA is so much more than a running program. SRLA trains students for the challenges of life,” Ms. Charney said. “Training for a marathon is difficult and you have to focus yourself. You have to push your body and you have to keep at it. To complete a marathon, as our students do, you have to complete a full-time life skills course in hard work, perseverance, and commitment.”

Since the program began in 1989, more than 66,000 students have participated in SRLA. SRLA alumni are now doctors, entrepreneurs, teachers, and even parents of current SRLA students. SRLA looks forward to continuing this tradition and legacy in its 30th season and beyond.

About Students Run LA

For 30 years, Students Run LA, a local nonprofit, has provided a free youth mentoring, marathon-training program throughout Greater Los Angeles. Each year, SRLA creates a safe, supportive community at 185+ public schools, welcoming more than 3,250 students of all backgrounds and abilities to train alongside their volunteer teachers to complete the Skechers Performance Los Angeles Marathon. Through this transformative experience, SRLA students discover their best selves and learn how to make plans for the future. Annually, more than 95% of the students who attempt the Marathon complete the 26.2 mile course; and more than 95% of the seniors in SRLA graduate from high school with plans to attend college the following fall, 75% of whom are the first in their families to go to college. For more information, please visit <https://srla.org/> and connect @SRLA on Twitter, @StudentsRunLA on Instagram and Facebook.

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Race Day Details

Address: 11001 Dronfield Avenue, Pacoima CA 91331, near Hansen Dam Recreation Center

Race Start Time: 8AM

Race End Time: 1:30PM