

# L.A. youth mentoring nonprofit, Nike distribute 2,800 pairs of shoes to students training for marathon

LOCAL NEWS

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Thousands of new Nike shoes were were handed out to youth athletes who have been training hard throughout the pandemic for the Los Angeles Marathon.

The effort is meant to keep 2,500 students from across L.A. to keep running and reaching for their goals.

Cassidy Smith of “Students Run L.A., a youth mentoring nonprofit based in Tarzana, said the organization partnered with Nike to distribute more than 2,800 pairs of donated shoes for all participating students and volunteer teacher leaders over the weekend.

The nonprofit has provided a free youth mentoring and marathon-training program throughout the Los Angeles area for 31 years.

During this pandemic, students are still training for a full 26.2-mile marathon this spring.

The training requires students to learn how to focus and stick with a challenge. It’s also a sweaty, concrete way for students to realize what they learn in training can be applied to other life goals.

But to stay safe amidst a pandemic, instead of gathering in groups, the students check in with each other and their leaders virtually.

“Having the opportunity to run, to connect with their friends online, it gives them something to look forward to in the day,” Smith said.

Along the way, students win medal to mark their milestones, and with a new pair of running shoes comes renewed energy to keep on going and to never give up.

Gene Kang reports for the KTLA 5 News from Tarzana on Dec. 6, 2020.