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South Florida Sun-Sentinel.com

New fundraiser fights childhood obesity

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Forum Publishing Group

May 13, 2009

Roudy Derisse stood at the starting line enthralled by what was about to take place April 26 at Tradewinds Park in Coconut Creek.

"I was stunned and grateful for everyone's support," said Derisse, whose goal is fighting childhood obesity one step at a time. "Everyone was happy, and we created a buzz for them to run."

Moments before the Summit Private School physical education teacher was ready to unleash the horde of runners participating in the Coach Roudy Fights Childhood Obesity 5K Run, Derisse, the event's founder, organizer and supervisor, grabbed a microphone. "I'd like to thank everybody for showing up," he said. "We're all here to stay healthy and live an active lifestyle. I want you to spread the message and go home, live it and do it."

Mission accomplished. Through the efforts of Derisse and his Summit staff, the 5K Run and Half-Mile Fun Run raised just over \$3,000, with proceeds going to the Obesity Action Coalition.

In his fifth year teaching at Summit Private School, Derisse is eager to send his message to the public through his newly created Coach Roudy Fights Childhood Obesity Foundation and its Web site, www.coachroudy.com. "We have a group of people who can't wait to do the next run," Derisse said. "I'm so grateful for everyone showing up this time around. It really went well."

Derisse can thank Dr. Susan Mike, co-owner and vice head of Summit Private School, for spreading the word. "I thought it was phenomenal," Mike said. "We instantly became sponsors and sent e-mails and fliers and encouraged families and staff to participate. Roudy does what he preaches. He's a model for fitness and good health practices and he stay's very involved with the kids, teaching them sportsmanship and good moral values."

Summit Private School fifth-grader Gatlyn Ligon, 10, followed Derisse's lead in preparing for the 5K run. "I think Coach did an awesome job of



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organizing it and getting me ready to run," said Ligon of [Boca Raton](#). "It was very fun, and I learned I must continue to eat healthy in order to be at my very best. There were so many people at the race who had a great time like I did."

Mike's daughter, Summit Private School first-grader Olivia Mike, and her second-grade friend Lea Lampert, 7, helped make the fun run a success.

"The magic show was the best part," said Olivia of [Delray Beach](#). "We got to see the martial arts group and the clapping flower. I can't wait to do this again."

Lampert is on board as well. "I was really fast during the race and I was ahead of my mom and sister," she said. "It was really worthwhile."

Summit Private School, located at 3881 NW Third Ave. in [Boca Raton](#), serves children ages 2 through grade six. Derisse coaches co-ed flag football, basketball and soccer and preaches health and nutrition during fitness class once or twice a week to students at the preschool, kindergarten and elementary school levels.

[Boynton Beach](#) fifth-grader Nick Updike, 11, sees Derisse Monday through Friday during class. He made sure not to miss his first organized race. "My dad was out of town, and he returned to run with me in the 5K," said Updike, who took the bronze medal in his age group. "Coach keeps me in shape and tells me to always stay healthy and to keep going with my nutrition. I couldn't have done this without him. Exercising and feeling you've accomplished something makes me feel better."

Ditto for Jacob Willens, a fourth-grader from [Boynton Beach](#). "I've never done one before," said Willens, 10. "I've always been a fast runner, and my favorite part was finishing and not dying. For three days, I couldn't walk. It was a lot of fun. Next time, I've got to be more prepared."

The entrance fee for the event was \$20 for adults and \$5 for children under 18. Nutritionist Staci Smith spoke to the kids about eating healthy. For their attendance, students received free collectible gifts from the NFL, NBA, WNBA and Miami FC.

To Derisse, 27, it was worth every penny. "We had 188 runners and about 230 in total with parents and children from ages 3 to 70," he said. "By having the race, we wanted to spread the positive message of eating healthy and living an active lifestyle. To me, looking back at the start line for the kids' race, with all of them counting down, I realized this is it. It's happening. It's here. It was a give-me-the-chills kind of moment. This was truly for the children, and it was great to see how eager the kids were to take off and go. You built it and they come and that's what made it all worth it."

For more information on Derisse's program and the battle against childhood obesity, e-mail him at roudyd@coachroudy.com or call 954-394-1489.

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