

SOAR Takes Wing at LA Marathon XXVI!

Enduring one of the worst winter storms in recent memory, seventeen Valley students successfully completed the grueling 26.2 mile "Stadium to Sea" Los Angeles Marathon Sunday March 20th. Sponsored by Students Off And Running (SOAR), a division of the Santa Clarita Track Club, this program dedicates itself to offering Santa Clarita Valley youth the opportunity to participate in a fully supported, 24 week 380 mile marathon training program while challenging themselves to accomplish something truly extraordinary in a non-competitive arena.

Smiling and looking more than a little soggy, team co-founder and Head Coach Kevin Sarkissian reflected on the day's events: "I couldn't be more proud of the level of determination these kids showed today. By 10am, the weather conditions had really become dangerous and folks were dropping all over the course from hypothermia. Apart from that, just committing to the SOAR program is tough enough considering all these guys have going on at home and in school. Couple that with a long, tough six month training season, running in every condition imaginable, and you really get an understanding why today really gave collective testament to their inner strength. I mean how often do you see the average teenager getting out of bed at 2am to run 26.2 miles in the pouring rain, it just doesn't happen," laughs Sarkissian.

Less than 1% of Americans ever complete a full marathon. SOAR is not about recruiting seasoned Valley high school athletes, the program looks for any kid with heart, kids that are willing to commit to a truly life changing experience.

Now completing it's fourth year of operation, the results continue to be impressive. Parents, teachers, and participating students alike report better focus in school, increased positive social interaction, and dramatic improvement in overall physical health.

Donations of new running equipment, gift cards to athletic retailers, and monetary donations are appreciated. Donors should visit www.soar-sc.org or contact Kevin Sarkissian at 661-877-7024 for more information.

Santa Clarita Signal – Community Sports Desk, March 2011

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Team SOAR 2011



**Golden Valley's Keeva Crooks
Riding the Storm through
Mile 25 at LA XXVI.**