

## Virtual Wildflower Run 2020

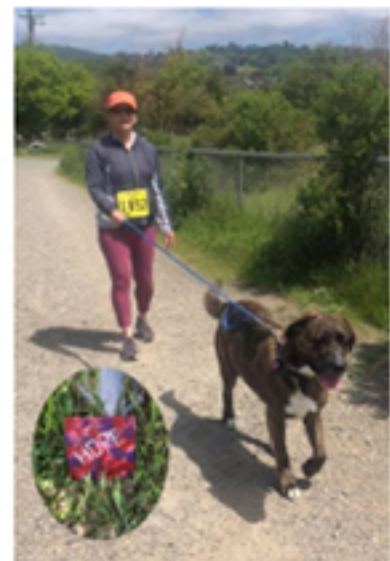
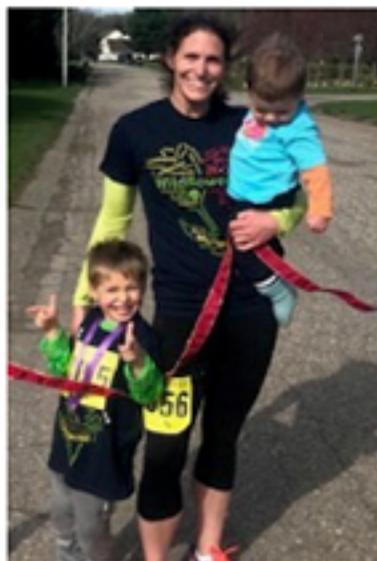
### Elizabeth Mandel

The 37th Annual Wildflower Run, initially scheduled for March 29 at Live Oak High School, was converted to a "Virtual Run" in order to conform to the CDC social distancing guidelines necessitated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Virtual Wildflower Run allowed registered participants to compete wherever they could – on the street, in the hills, park, or on a treadmill at home. Run photos submitted to the Wildflower Run social media contest were entered into a drawing for prizes. The Virtual Run will end on May 3. The WFR Committee has been pleased with the community's response. While registrations were down (430 versus the usual 1000), both the participants and sponsors maintained their support after the shift to a virtual event was announced. AAUW has worked hard to maintain their commitment to the runners. In addition to adding the prize

drawing, several members have contributed time and effort to package and mail or deliver goodie bags, bibs and t-shirts to the participants.

AAUW's Wildflower Run annually funds local scholarships, community grants, and leadership programs for women and girls. In 2019, AAUW allocated a record \$65,000. With the cancelling of other upcoming non-profit community events (most notably the Mushroom Mardi Gras), these funds will be needed even more in the upcoming year. Although AAUW is confident it will be able to continue to support our community, we still need your help. If you have not yet donated to the Wildflower Fund, please see the next page make a donation! No amount is too small!



Top left: "Kynzie was so excited to get her swag and do her virtual run!"

Bottom from left to right: Layla received a bonus entry in the prize drawing because she ran in costume.

From Lisa in Kalamazoo, "We are in Kalamazoo, MI for the pandemic with my parents and want to thank you for sending us our t-shirts, race bibs, and medals. It was Duke's first race and your package made it special! My parents set up a start and finish line and we notified the neighbors who came out to cheer us on. It will be a special memory."

Emily and Miriam said, "We did our Wildflower Run virtually this year —from home!"

Branch member Sandra said, "5K walk with my pup! Missed seeing my Wildflower Run buddies in person on race day (and doing the early morning coffee run for the race crew!) But big thanks for this awesome AAUW crew for the effort to put on a successful virtual event! You all rock!! And I love the inspiring painted rocks & tiles I saw on my walk."