

5K RACE ON CAMPUS BENEFITS SPRING HILL'S INTERNATIONAL SERVICE IMMERSION PROGRAM

by Lindsay Hughes, MLA '08



Clockwise from left: A group of runners and volunteers get ready for the Run of the Hill 5K; scenes from Emily's ISIP trip to Nicaragua in spring 2013.

Emily King had an ambitious goal for her senior seminar project: plan, market and execute a 5K race on Spring Hill's campus, with a goal of raising \$3,000 for the College's International Service Immersion Program (ISIP).

The immersion program is close to King's heart, as her experiences in El Salvador her junior year reshaped how she sees the world.

"When I went to El Salvador, I learned what it really means to live in solidarity with and to accompany people very different from myself," she said. "I learned what Jesuit philosophy really means, and it made me so proud to go to a school that centers itself on this philosophy."

King became more involved in the program her senior year and served as a student leader on the trip to Nicaragua this past spring. "I don't think I can really explain how much ISIP means to me," she said. "It's hands down one of the best things that Spring Hill offers."

The expenses for the service-immersion trips total more than \$100,000 each year. Campus Ministry considered organizing a 5K as a fundraiser for ISIP last year, but the race proved to be too large an undertaking in a short timeframe. King, a communication arts major concentrating in public relations and advertising, determined that taking on the fundraiser would be the ideal project for her senior seminar.

During fall 2012, King spent the semester working through the logistics of hosting a race on campus and starting a fundraiser from scratch. She approached businesses for title sponsorships and started marketing the race via social media. As the race day drew closer in the spring, King amped up its media presence, worked with graphic design major Allison Patrick '13 to create a new logo, ordered race T-shirts, and delegated volunteer responsibilities.

"I learned just how much goes into planning a fundraiser - way more than I expected," King said.

A partnership between Campus Ministry and the Office of Alumni Programs, the Run of the Hill 5K was set for Sunday, April 14, the last day of Homecoming on the Hill, to draw greater alumni participation. However, 10 minutes before the race was to start at 8 a.m., heavy rains and lightning forced race officials to postpone the 5K until the following Sunday.

Although postponing the race was disappointing, particularly since most out-of-town alumni who registered were unable to participate, King maintained a positive outlook. "The rain on the race day was the most concrete challenge," she said. "But, the volunteers' positive attitudes and willingness to help and come out again the next weekend was really awesome

and made the whole rescheduling business a lot easier. I definitely can't thank the volunteers enough."

The skies were blue the following Sunday, and King and her team of volunteers - mostly ISIP students and faculty/staff advisors - were ready to make the day a success.

And it was. The Run of the Hill 5K made \$6,465.02 in profit - more than double King's goal.

Alumni connections helped to secure title sponsorships through Joe Zarzaur '93 of Zarzaur Law, P.A., and Gary D.E. Cowles '85 of Cowles, Murphy, Glover & Associates. Artist Kathleen Kirk '11 donated signed prints of the Avenue of the Oaks as race prizes.

"Since the race was successful this year and will only grow from here, companies now have the opportunity to actually see how their business will be promoted through sponsoring the Run of the Hill 5K," she said.

King's senior seminar project gave her the opportunity to hone her leadership skills and taught her a great deal about fundraising, event planning, marketing, public relations, and the power of social media. But, the biggest lesson she learned was the importance of volunteers.

"This race really showed me that I'm not making people do something they don't want to do. They believe in ISIP and want to raise money for a program that is important to them," she said. "That puts a whole new spin on fundraising when you think about it as not me raising money, but creating an opportunity for people to work together to benefit a cause. That's what I think makes fundraising fun."

The Run of the Hill 5K will be a regular event during Homecoming on the Hill. Next year's race is set for 8 a.m. Saturday, April 5, 2014.

{ EMILY KING '13

Emily's senior seminar project helped to raise more than \$6,400 for Spring Hill's International Service Immersion Program.

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ON YOUR MARK. GET SET. SAVE THE DATE FOR NEXT YEAR'S

RUN OF THE HILL 5K

Saturday, April 5, 2014 at 8:00 a.m. on the *Avenue of the Oaks*
during HOMECOMING ON THE HILL, April 4-6, 2014

