

12th Annual M2M is full of good vibes

All runners enjoyed a cool morning for this year's event. Here, participants in the half-marathon wait eagerly at the starting line.



STORY BY MARCI ROBERTS
PHOTOS BY JAMES EVANS

This year's 12th annual Marathon to Marathon (or M2M) on Saturday, October 24, welcomed a record 368 runners. One couple came all the way from Sweden specifically to race the M2M. Another couple came from Queensland, Australia. One guy came from Guadalajara, Mexico to meet up with his brother coming from Houston for their first marathon. Others joined in from California, Illinois, Oklahoma, S. Dakota, Tennessee, Washington, Colorado, Georgia, New Mexico and Nevada.

On a cool (even foggy in parts) morning, hundreds of participants ran a full marathon (26.2 miles), half marathon, 10k, or 5k along Hwy 385, with all courses ending in Marathon.

Winners: men's full marathon Jonathan Nichols (2:50:54), age 23,

from Arlington, Texas; women's full marathon Kailey Gursoy (3:16:09) age 22 from Austin, Texas. For the 5k race in the 80-89 category: 1st and 2nd place to Pat Martin, age 87 from Marathon, and Julia Pinedo, age 82, from Marathon.

All runners received a medal, a long-sleeve T-shirt, a free pasta dinner in Marathon or Fort Stockton the night before, and a free awards party post-race at the Marathon Motel courtyard Saturday evening with music by Craig Carter and the Spur of the Moment band.

The Marathon Volunteer Fire Department provided an excellent barbeque lunch fundraiser, doing all the cooking and serving; M2M gave \$6271 to them from the proceeds.

Since 2011, the M2M has given \$28,941 back to the community, to organizations such as the Marathon Volunteer Fire Dept., the Marathon Public Library, the Marathon Chamber of Commerce, the Marathon Parent-Teacher Organization, and The Marathon Foundation Telescope Project.

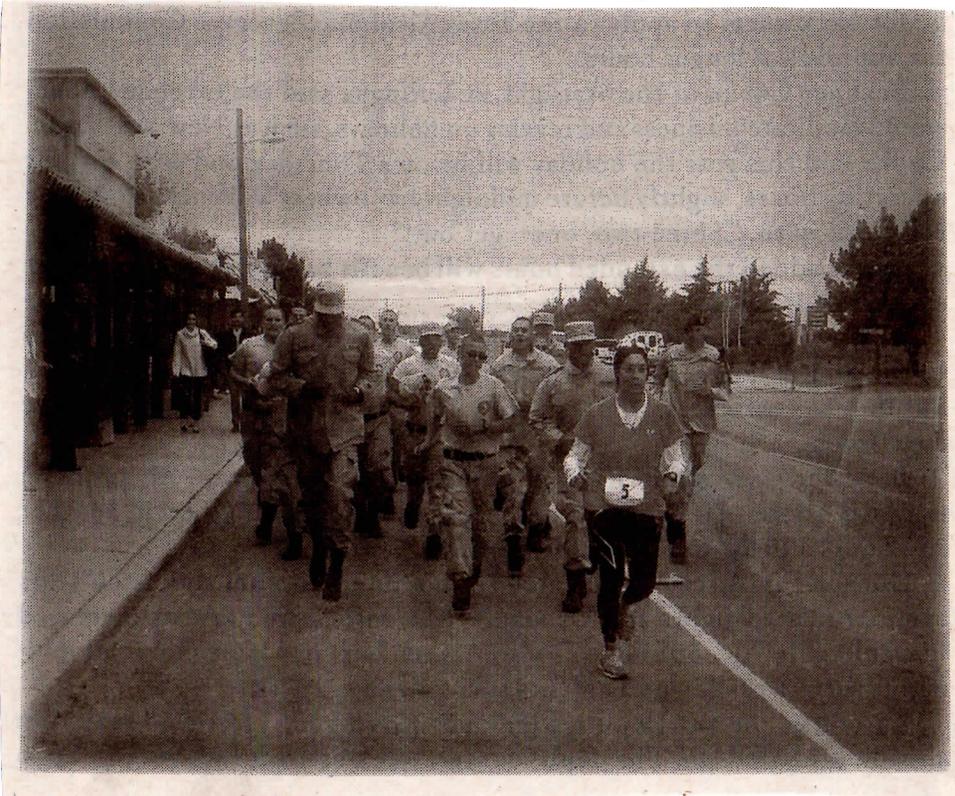
Organizer Marci Roberts was delighted with this year's event, as is clear from her ebullient message to M2M runners on the event's Facebook page: "YOU ARE THE BEST!!!! The one word to describe the race this year is 'joy.' You filled me up with it on Saturday. For a few hours in a little town in the middle of West Texas, 100 volunteers and 368 racers bring everything they have to a race called the M2M. The volunteers are excited to have you, you are excited to be here. It is magical."

As one participant wrote in an email to organizer Marci Roberts: "The best Marathon EVER! Thank you! Thank you for what you do to give back to the community of Marathon and the children there. I am a teacher and know and appreciate the importance of community support. I loved meeting the townspeople and racers. Such a warm and friendly atmosphere, simplicity at its best. [M2M is] a great reminder of how we should all live. WE are here to serve each other, to show love and support. Thanks again and I will see you next year."



ABOVE: Pat Martin and Julia Pinedo from Marathon were first- and second-place winners in the 80-89 age category of the 5k.

RIGHT: Marathon Volunteer Fire Dept. brought in \$6271 from the M2M through its post-race lunch; department volunteers cooked and served twelve briskets, potato salad, coleslaw, beans, cornbread and cobbler, all homemade.



BELOW: 28 members of the Texas Challenge Academy ran the end of the course and over the finish line with the last participant.