

Grosse Pointe News

The ‘ripple effect’ — Pointer runs marathon to raise awareness, funds for Samaritas

By Jody McVeigh on October 17, 2018

Grosse Pointe Park resident Sarah Prues Hecker hates running.

But even more so, she loves Samaritas, a social ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America whose vision is to “connect people with families and communities, empower them to live their fullest life possible and create a ripple effect of transformation.”

So when Samaritas put out a call for participation in the Detroit Free Press Marathon, Prues Hecker jumped at the chance.

“I worked for Samaritas in Lansing when I was in college, so I’ve been a part of the organization more than 20 years,” she said, “and as a board member for five or six years. When they put out the need for team members, as a board member I have to be part of the team. I hate running, but I love the organization and I’ll do whatever I have to do to raise awareness of Samaritas and what we do.”

Several Samaritas leaders and board members will run in the Detroit and Grand Rapids marathons Sunday, Oct. 21, in a demonstration of the connection and commitment of the statewide nonprofit.

“Samaritas is a statewide organization. It’s one of the largest nonprofit organizations in the state,” Prues Hecker said. “We want to make sure people know the Samaritas name and the services we provide. The idea is to ‘be the ripple.’ If I can run four miles and make a difference to 40 different families, that’s important to me.”

As part of Team Ripple Effects, Prues Hecker’s portion of the relay — the marathon’s last leg — spans 4.5 miles. It’s not her first time doing something she loathes in the name of something she loves.

“I did it once before for a different organization — THAW, The Heat and Warmth Fund,” she said. “I believe in teamwork. ... And it’s a beautiful run on the riverfront.”

“This is the first time Samaritas is doing this,” said Kelli Dobner, Samaritas chief advancement officer. “Everybody can get involved — the bigger the team, the better. You can run for a reason — no matter what that reason is — across all of our service lines. We

are going to connect everyone through this ripple effect. With our senior staff and board members coming together, they're not just talking the talk, they're walking the walk — literally — as a physical representation of what we are trying to accomplish.”

Team Ripple Effects is raising money for Samaritas through the Detroit Free Press Marathon website, as well as its own website. To donate, visit crowdrise.com/o/en/campaign/team-ripple-effect.