

H-F Community Running Club member competes in Boston Marathon

BY ANGELA DENK
adenk@hfchronicle.com

Priscilla Cordero, a longtime member of the Homewood-Flossmoor Community Running Club, aims to run a marathon in every state, and this year she knocked a giant off the list — she competed in the Boston Marathon.

Cordero was one of 25,314 runners who participated in the storied race on April 18. The course, which begins in Hopkinton, Massachusetts, and ends in downtown Boston, meanders through eight municipalities and challenges the hardest athletes with its hills and turns. Cordero, who finished the race at 4:13:56, said it was an accomplishment not just to complete the race but even to qualify for it.

“My first attempt at qualifying for Boston was in 2014. I fell three minutes short. I ended up at a 3:43 time and I needed a 3:40,” Cordero said. “In 2019, I qualified at the Milwaukee Lakefront Marathon. I got my best time ever — I ran a 3:37:27 — so



Priscilla Cordero

I was under 3:40, but that time qualified me for 2021 [because of COVID-19], and unfortunately 2021 got moved from April to October and they shortened the field to

20,000 including the charity runners, so I was unable to compete.”

Determined, Cordero tried again.

Her 3:35:01 finish at Light at the End of the Tunnel Marathon in June 2021 at North Bend, Washington, got her to Boston. She applied to run in September, and in early December, she knew she was in.

“I was just nervous that something would go wrong, and I wouldn’t get into Boston on some fluke,” she said.

Cordero arrived in Massachusetts on April 16, just two days before the race, with her husband, three children, mother and sister in tow, and on the morning of April 18 — with a bit of wind and chill in the air — she set off to complete the course.

“The first 10 miles or so of [the] Boston [Marathon] are downhill,” she shared on her social media account after the race, “so it’s a false reassurance of feeling good.”

Cordero said that overall, the course is hilly and demanding.

Her family was watching around mile 6, but she was unable to see them through

the crowd. They moved further along the route as the race progressed and let her know they would be at mile 25. Cordero said they motivated her to keep running to the end to complete the 26.2 marathon.

“Miles 18-23 were really tough, but the thought of seeing them at 25 kept me going,” she said.

The last two miles of the marathon take the runners into Boston proper, through the city and near the historical Boston Common. That last stretch, Cordero said, tests runners but rewards them at the end.

“I mean the crowds are thick (near the end). I get the goosebumps just talking about it. It’s indescribable. The sound, the crowds, you’re in so much pain...knowing I was about to finish was a relief but crossing the finish line is just bliss. It’s hard to describe,” she said.

Although a lifelong runner (originally a soccer player, she said, who used running to stay in game shape), Cordero credits the H-F Community Running Club with refining her athletic edge.

Chance finally comes for D153 teacher to run Boston

BY MARILYN THOMAS
mthomas@hfchronicle.com

Matt Johnson is the band director at James Hart School in Homewood, but he’s also an avid runner who got his chance to run the 2022 Boston Marathon April 18.

“It’s definitely a lifetime achievement and accomplishment. I’ve been trying to get in it for years, so it was fun to finally get in it this year,” he said.

Johnson ran track and cross country in high school in Champaign, Illinois. He’s been running ever since and is a member of the Elmhurst Running Club. The Boston Marathon was his

11th marathon since 2015. His time was 3:04:56 on the 26.2-mile course — a great time but not his best time for a marathon.

To run Boston, runners meet or exceed a qualifying time. Johnson tried several times to get in. He missed one qualifier by 8 seconds. He had a qualifying time in December 2019 to get him into the 2020 race, but it was canceled due to the pandemic. He ran a race in October 2021 with a time that was 4 seconds under the qualifying time. That allowed him to register for Boston’s 2022 race.

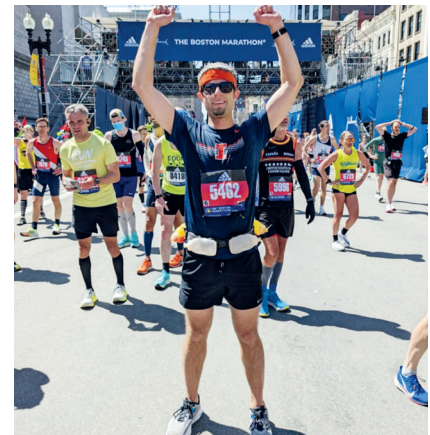
“Some of the things that were exciting about it (include that) it’s the most spectated race in the world. There

were so many fans everywhere,” he said. “You run through several small towns before you finally get to Boston and their downtown areas have a party and they’re cheering you on.

“It’s a really great festive celebration. Everybody’s nice and supportive,” he said. “It’s just a really great positive atmosphere. You run that final stretch in downtown Boston with lots of people on either side and you’re among the skyscrapers and all those famous Boston spots.”

Johnson was cheered on by his wife and parents.

Will he do it again? “I don’t know if I’ll do it again or not, but it was a really fun experience,” he added.



Matt Johnson

Rescue Starts Today, LLC RST!
WORKPLACE CPR AND FIRST AID TRAINING
Homewood, Chicago, and the South Suburbs
BLS for Healthcare Providers
CPR and First Aid for Adults and Pediatrics
Onsite for your Work, School or Office! Learn Life-Saving Skills Today!
Same day Certification! Group Rates Available!
For Inquiries: training@rescuestartstoday.com, 917-822-6270



A Hidden Gem in Homewood!!

SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

Join us every Sunday!

Indoor or parking lot services, 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m.
Adult Bible Study and Sunday School for all ages, 9:45 a.m.
(We are 1/2 block west of Riegel Road)

18324 Ashland Ave. in Homewood | 708-798-1820 | www.salemhomewood.org