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Young cancer survivor gears up for LiveStrong 5K

By Pam LeBlanc | Thursday, October 13, 2011, 05:16 AM



The last time Parker Yax did the LiveStrong 5K, he crossed the finish line riding in the back of a pedicab.

That was two years ago. This time, Parker plans to walk and run all 3.1 miles on his own, something that seemed all but impossible not that long ago.

Parker, 8, was diagnosed with medulloblastoma, a type of brain cancer, when he was 5. Surgeons removed a malignant tumor in 2009, and Parker underwent 30 days of radiation and a year and a half of chemotherapy.

The surgery left Parker, who attends Laurel Mountain Elementary School, with hemiparesis, a type of temporary paralysis on one side of the body. He had to relearn how to walk, run and use the whole left side of his body, says his mother, Sandra Yax.

Now he's ready to tackle a 5K on his own.

"He's going to run some of it and walk some of it," Sandra Yax said. "He's totally excited. There are a lot of great people out there and a lot of support. He loves going out and not being restricted in anyway."

Parker and Sandra will be part of the Survivor's Challenge team from Dell Children's Medical Center.

The 5K is part of the Team LiveStrong Challenge Austin weekend, which also includes a 20-, 45-, 65- or 90-mile bike ride through the Hill Country on Sunday.

Last year's events raised \$3.1 million for the LiveStrong Foundation, which works to improve the lives of the 28 million people living with cancer.

There's still time to register. Entry fee is \$35 for the 5K or \$50 for the bike ride (cycling participants also must raise \$250 for LiveStrong.)

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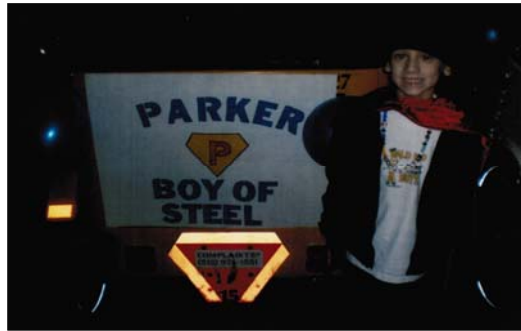
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Packet picket for the 5K will take place from noon-7 p.m. Friday and 7-7:45 a.m. Saturday at La Zona Rosa, 612 W. Fourth Street. Cyclists can pick up packets from noon-7 p.m. Friday or 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Saturday at La Zona Rosa, or 6:30-7:30 a.m. Sunday at Roger Hanks Park in Dripping Springs, where the bike ride begins.

For more information [go here](#).

(The photo above, provided by LiveStrong, shows, from left to right, Frankie and Valente Garcia with nurse Alyssa Tough and Parker Yax. Frankie and Parker are cancer survivors who are preparing to run the Team Survivor Challenge of the LiveStrong 5K.)

(The family photo below shows Parker with his pedicab before the 2009 LiveStrong 5K. He's wearing "beads of courage" given to him by hospital staff. Each bead represents a different medical procedure he underwent during treatment. He collected two full necklaces.)



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