

Sunday, January 13<sup>th</sup>

### **Houston Marathon/Half Marathon**

There were 11 SMRC members running this event. The five members who ran the marathon were Liesela, Mark, Doug, Tim, and Sharon. The six members who ran the half marathon were Laura, Teresa, Charlene, Krista, Brenna, and I.

With the exception of Liesela, we stayed at the Hotel Icon (a new favorite hotel of Laura's and mine, and maybe some of the other members too). Liesela did not stay with us because she stayed at another hotel; where at least Laura was able to connect with her through conversations on the phone. Elma was there in Houston for a wedding and was intending to run the half, as a bandit! My bet is that she did not, given all that she had to do with the wedding. Wait! She did not run the race. On the way home we heard from her, and it sounds like she has plantar fasciitis. She has an appointment with the doctor.

The race was a success for every runner in the SMRC; that is, we all made it to the finish line. There were many highlights of this race, the first being that this was Mark's first marathon! His goal was four hours, and was only 11 minutes away from obtaining it. Most importantly, he gained a lot of experience and, knowing Mark, he will be analyzing the race for some time.

Another highlight was the fact that this was Brenna's first half marathon! When the rest of the runners asked her about her experience, her consistent reply was, "I had so much fun!" It appeared that Brenna's eyes were opened to the many dynamics of participating in such an event. She was able to appreciate her experience and her constantly-changing environment. Hold on to that, Brenna!

Another highlight was watching Doug and Tim finish. These two have been training for approximately 6 months for this marathon. They both finished well, especially considering that Doug was still recovering from some illness – mainly a residual cough – and Tim had a long day with the school's soccer team and then drove to Houston, arriving at 2:00a.m. Tim only had 3 hours of sleep!

The collaboration of the SMRC members to attend this event and spend time together was another highlight. We planned for the event, drove to Houston, ate together, slept together (ahhhmmm, remember everyone, what happened in Houston stays in Houston), supported each other, and simply bonded.

The biggest highlight for me was choosing to BE supportive. Initially I had intended to simply use this race as a long run, but then something changed. When conversing with Mark, Krista, and Brenna, I discovered that they were all basically running the same pace, which they hadn't realized. It was at this time that I chose to experience BEING supportive of Mark – being that it is his first marathon – and I invited Brenna and Krista to join me. After finding Mark and Brenna

and running with them from miles 3 to 9, I ran ahead to catch Krista at 9.5 miles and ran the rest of the half marathon with her. I could have run my own race, but I have experienced this before.

Boundless opportunities await us all, every day, every hour, every minute, and every moment. When you are aware of such an opportunity to give to another, do so, and experience that aspect of love so that you can remember WHO YOU REALLY ARE.