

# HumanRace

NEWS, TRENDS, AND REGULAR RUNNERS DOING AMAZING THINGS

## CLASS ACT

Kara Lubin chaperoning a frenzied group of kid-runners in Corona, California



## School of Run

This teacher found the cure to a restless classroom: challenge kids to log 100 miles

BY CATHLEEN CALKINS

**TWELVE-YEAR-OLD** Katie Wong surges down the sidewalk, seemingly in gleeful competition with the setting sun as it dips toward the mountains beyond her Corona, California, subdivision. Her auburn hair is pulled into a ponytail that reveals a determined grin. Every weekday after finishing homework Katie clocks miles, while her mom trails in the family minivan, working toward her school-year goal: 100 miles.

Katie has chased this milestone every year since she was 7, when her elemen-

tary school signed up to join the 100 Mile Club, a nonprofit fitness program that challenges kids to run for the century mark within a single school year. Kara Lubin, 44, launched the club in Corona in 1992, and in two decades her program has been adopted by 140 schools in eight states across the country (plus one in Japan) and this year will enroll 30,000 students from kindergarten through 12th grade.

Lubin attributes her program's growth to its simplicity: Kids run →



**CATCH ME IF YOU CAN**  
Students add to their mileage totals at a multi-school running event in Corona.



every day in pursuit of a common goal. “We issue this challenge,” she says, “and they do it together.” Parents and teachers volunteer as “coaches” and lead students on runs—before class, after class, or during lunch, depending on the school. Kids on pace for 100 miles log about three miles a week. Twenty years ago, though, those daily runs were a solution to a complex problem: saving a sinking classroom.

At the time Lubin was a special-education teacher with 13 students suffering classic learning disabilities, from dyslexia to autism. “They couldn’t sit still,” she recalls. “You put them in an academic situation and it was fail, fail, fail.” That summer, Lubin split her time running and riding Arabian horses—activities that gave her an idea. Jockeys train Arabians to become comfortable taking instructions through an exercise called

“lunging”—guiding them to run in circles. Lubin thought by taking her class on daily runs she could achieve similar results. “Literally, I was lunging my kids.”

At first, the students resisted. Karina Villaseñor was one of them. “Most of us were angry and didn’t like it,” Villaseñor, now 27, says of her teacher’s 10-minute mandated morning run. Lubin placed gold stars on a wall chart to track each kid’s progress. Every mile became a success, and within a week she noticed a change: Students were more engaged in class, more focused on their work.

Villaseñor, now a stay-at-home mother of two, credits the running club with helping her develop self-assurance from an early age. Last spring, she graduated from California Baptist University with a bachelor’s in political science—becoming the first in her family to earn a college degree.

“Every time I felt like giving up,” she says, “I would remember the 100 Mile Club. It changed my life.”

After six years incubating in her own classroom, Lubin’s idea spread to others within her school, then to other schools in California, then beyond state lines, and, now, across the Pacific Ocean. Today, heading up the 100 Mile Club, which became a nonprofit in 2006, is a full-time job for Lubin. Last June, her program caught the attention of Michelle Obama. The First Lady partnered with Child Obesity180, a national organization focused on fighting youth weight issues through various channels, to conduct a competition rewarding the most innovative school-based youth fitness programs. From a pool of more than 500 applicants, the 100 Mile Club was one of two winners rewarded with a \$100,000 grant.

For her part, Lubin works hard to keep fees low: \$10 per student covers the cost of T-shirts, milestone rewards, and a tool kit for coaches, among other things. In exchange, students like Katie Wong have the opportunity to achieve tangible goals, gain confidence, and encourage their peers to succeed alongside them. In her first year in the club, Katie ran 120 miles and befriended an overweight boy who struggled to keep up with the class. “When we finished, we would urge him to continue,” she says, noting that the boy didn’t make it all the way to 100. She grins and adds, “but he *did* run 95.” **EW**

MORE THAN 100,000 KIDS HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THE 100 MILE CLUB SINCE 1992. FOR MORE DETAILS, VISIT 100MILECLUB.COM.

## THE INTERSECTION Where running and culture collide

### DREAM WORKOUT

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### POOR FORM

Hurdler Liu Xiang, who crashed at the London Olympics, suffers another blow when a Chinese hospital uses his photo to promote a sexual performance aid.



### HAUTE TOE-TURE

Models wear Vibram FiveFingers on the runway during designer Adrian Alica’s show at New York Fashion Week in September.



### THEY’RE FAST?

Actress Olivia Wilde proclaims that she and her actor boyfriend Jason Sudeikis “have sex like Kenyan marathon runners.” Whatever that means.



### GOLDEN TOUCH

The Nikon camera Usain Bolt grabbed from a media member to photograph fans after his Olympic 200-meter win sells for \$7,300 in a charity auction.