

# Peoria store hosting virtual race

**Running Central one of few Nike outlets linking runners to global event; real run will coincide**

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PEORIA —

Want to join the Human Race?

On Aug. 31, you could join 1 million people across seven continents in the 10-K Nike Plus Human Race.

Running Central is one of a few Nike outlets that will organize a virtual run on this date. The event will span 25 cities in four continents. The goal is to get people all over the world to run on the same day, in the first global connection of its kind. Registration officially opens on June 2.

A portion of the \$30 registration fee will be divided up among ninemillion.org, the Livestrong Foundation and the World Wildlife Fund.

While the run is for charity, it is also an ingenious marketing plan to sell Nike shoes and gizmos. People are encouraged to take part virtually by registering with Nike Plus and having their race times and distance covered tracked digitally. To do that, Nike suggests purchasing the Nike Plus iPod and Nike Plus Sport Band. A wireless sensor inserted in your shoe is in synch with an iPod or a special wristband with a USB flash drive to track your run, which can be uploaded later to the race Web site.

"You don't have to wear Nike shoes to run or buy any of these gadgets," said Adam White, owner of Running Central, which is one of the few selected virtual sites. "But you can just run and get involved with the rest of the world."

Peoria, however, will also have an actual run as well as a street fair on that day coordinated by the Campaign for a Walkable West Bluff, Renaissance Park and the city.

"The Walkable West Bluff people approached me about a run and a fall festival on Main Street about a month ago," White said. "I asked if they could move up their event to join us."

Both Renaissance Park and the Campaign for a Walkable West Bluff had considered teaming up to organize a run or a walk through their area to highlight the benefits of living in a community that encourages people to meet and greet and visit with one another on the streets.

"I suggested that they join us on Aug. 31 so we could all do this on the same day," he said.

After some discussion with Jennifer Brady, who represents the Walkable West Bluff campaign, White agreed they could work together and run both events on the same day.

White says he is not calling it a race to encourage greater participation. There will be no one timing or keeping track of the run itself.

"People can walk with their kids in strollers, or those who want to race may do so also," he said.

The West Bluff groups are currently feverishly figuring out the logistics of the event.

"We don't know the scale of the project yet, so we're working on it," Brady said. "For the run, we're working on several different scenarios and the route and what all we need to make it work. Some of us have walked the routes, so we know what we need to put before the City Council when we ask for street closures."

Second District Councilwoman Barbara Van Auken, who supports the Walkable West Bluff campaign, said, "I think it's a wonderful way to highlight the heart and soul of the West Bluff. It allows people to get up on Main Street and gives them a chance to see Main Street could be a destination if it were designed differently, with wider sidewalks and narrower streets."

Getting more pedestrian traffic, Van Auken said, also would serve as a deterrent to crime. In particular, she hoped the street life that was so abundant here during her youth could be brought back to make the area vibrant again.

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