

## Healthy Kids Running Series

I attended the youth running workshop which was basically the presentation of three different programs geared to youth running.

One of them was the Healthy Kids Running Series which sounded like it would be a good complement to Lawrence's elementary schools' marathon clubs. This is a series of 5 races (events) held on five consecutive Sunday afternoons (either in the spring or the fall normally) geared towards youth from age 2 through middle school. There must be a volunteer coordinator (or co-coordinators) from the community who does the organizing work. The Healthy Kids Running Series program provides shirts, formats for all communications, on-line registration and medals. The organizers must find a location (normally a school sports field – they prefer all-grass surface) and volunteers to put on the events. The organizers (or in our case the running club) provides a \$250 check which Healthy Kids holds until the completion of the contract and then returns it uncashed if the terms of the contract are fulfilled. Local organizers are asked to try to get a minimum of two \$250 sponsorships from local businesses to help defray costs. The local coordinators are record-checked for any criminal background.

I thought it sounded like this program could be set up to provide an extra bit of racing/running opportunity especially for those kids in the marathon clubs who would like a little more in the way of running opportunities and a taste of competitive running. Of course, any and all youth would be able to participate. The cost to the runner is \$35 for the entire 5 race series (or \$10 for just one event). If there are marathon club runners who the coordinators feel would benefit from this series but who cannot afford the \$25, runLawrence could subsidize them. It was also suggested to me that we could possibly get the Boys and Girls Club involved (possibly to provide transportation). I am thinking of a central location perhaps using Broken Arrow park

This is mostly an east-coast program so far, but it is spreading and there are programs operating in CA as well as othr western states. I discovered the only program in Kansas currently is in Wichita. I contacted the coordinator there and she said "This is the best thing I've ever done" and offered many tips and suggestions.

I have more information and I think you can see that I am quite sold on runLawrence taking on this project. I think it has the possibility of making a big impact on youth running in Lawence at minimal cost. When I talked personally with the presenter, he also said it sounded like with our marathon clubs and the experience of runLawrence, most of the hard work is already done and this should fit pretty seamlessly in with what is already in place. It would also provide a good opportunity for an end-of-season celebration for the marathon clubs.