

NIEHS employees flex muscles during Health and Fitness Week

By Eddy Ball

As they do each year, NIEHS employees and contractors turned out to celebrate the Institute's rites of spring — the full schedule of competitions and activities that make up Health and Fitness Week. This year's Seattle-like spring weather April 29-May 3 meant the cancellation of the Obstacle Course, but the drizzles and threats of rain failed to detour enthusiasts from indoor events or from the high-profile muscular outdoor competitions.

Highlighting the week were the annual 2-mile nature walk and Rogathon 5K run, which consistently draw the biggest crowds of the week. The Rogathon is named for a longtime champion of the fun run, NIEHS epidemiologist Walter Rogan, M.D.

Health and Fitness Week is always an affair where the process is more important than the outcome. The laurels rarely fall very far from the group of serial winners, but that doesn't seem to discourage anyone from fully enjoying the games and good-natured competition. Whether they place first or last, most participants are justifiably proud of being a part of the annual celebration.

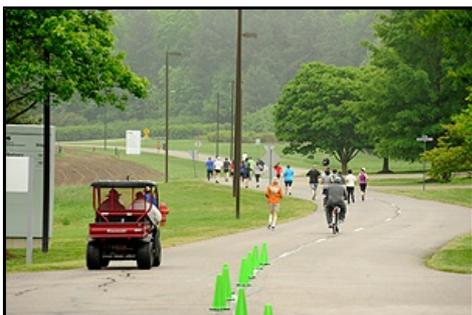
Health and Fitness Week takes place during National Physical Fitness and Sports Month, which is designated each year by Presidential proclamation. The fun-filled week is organized and coordinated by members of the NIEHS Office of Management (OM) Health and Safety Branch (HSB) and Administrative Services and Analysis Branch.



An exuberant April Lane, center, of OM, led the participants in the nature walk, as they started at the NIEHS main building. Several trekkers, such as Jennie Foushee, left, of the Division of Intramural Research (DIR), brought along umbrellas, in case the drizzle became heavier during the walk. (Photo courtesy of Steve McCaw)



Employee Services Manager Ed Kang flashed the victory sign confidently, as he and smiling colleagues from OM made their way along the route. (Photo courtesy of Steve McCaw)



HSB safety officer Chris Hunt and colleagues followed behind the runners, to make sure the route through the misty campus was clear of traffic and the athletes remained healthy during the run. (Photo courtesy of Steve McCaw)



Unlike the runners who passed them by, nature walk participants had some opportunity to socialize along the route. Dudley Riner, left, of OM, chats with DIR visiting fellows Natacha Steinckwich-Besancon, Ph.D., and Felicity Davis, Ph.D., right. (Photo courtesy of Steve McCaw)



As she has for several years, HSB industrial hygienist VeeVee Shropshire was on hand, and dressed for the occasion, to help coordinate activities. (Photo courtesy of Steve McCaw)



Back from a two-year break from competition, lab chief Bill Copeland, Ph.D., was serious about his performance. His dedication paid off, as Copeland placed first in his age group. (Photo courtesy of Steve McCaw)



As the Rogathon began, most of the runners were trying too hard to get a good start, to spend much time in smiling and banter. Leading the pack were DIR scientists Tim Gingerich, Ph.D., front, a visiting fellow, and lead researcher Lars Pedersen, Ph.D., next to him in orange, who ended up sharing first place in the competition. (Photo courtesy of Steve McCaw)



With the initial pressure of the starting line behind them, some of the participants, including Kristen Fisher of OM, took advantage of opportunities to clown for the camera. (Photo courtesy of Steve McCaw)



Health and Fitness Week basketball competition is good natured, but as the determination evident in the expression of NIEHS fellow Andrew Oldfield, Ph.D., suggests, it's still a competition that requires players to give their all. (Photo courtesy of Steve McCaw)



Eric Potts, right, took to the air as Randy Hardy tried in vain to block the shot. Potts, Gordon Caviness, and Sha-mel Riggins won first place, overcoming the best efforts of the second-place team, Hardy, Oldfield, and Mark Rubino, and third-place winners William Boyd, Ken Coffey, Caranza Smith, and Ron Altieri. (Photo courtesy of Steve McCaw)

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