



WORD from = the BIRD

BCRR MONTHLY NEWS

WWW.BCRR.ORG

ISSUE 54 - December 2015

Change is Good Christmas Party

Each year from 60 to 80 attend our formal Christmas party which has been at various locations but, most recently the Cadillac Bar. Each attendee pays \$25 to attend. But, did you know the party costs a lot more than that? Check out the numbers below. On average, in addition to what the guest receipts are, BCRR pays approximately \$1,700—\$2,700 for this party. Guests often pay for drinks as well, so their \$25 may turn into \$50 quickly. In fact, some have said that the party is expensive for people, or that people are not attending due to the price.

Check out these numbers:

2013

Cadillac Bar - \$3,272

Door prizes - \$279

Total - \$3,551

\$1,795 collected at door

\$1,756 *subsidized by BCRR*

2014

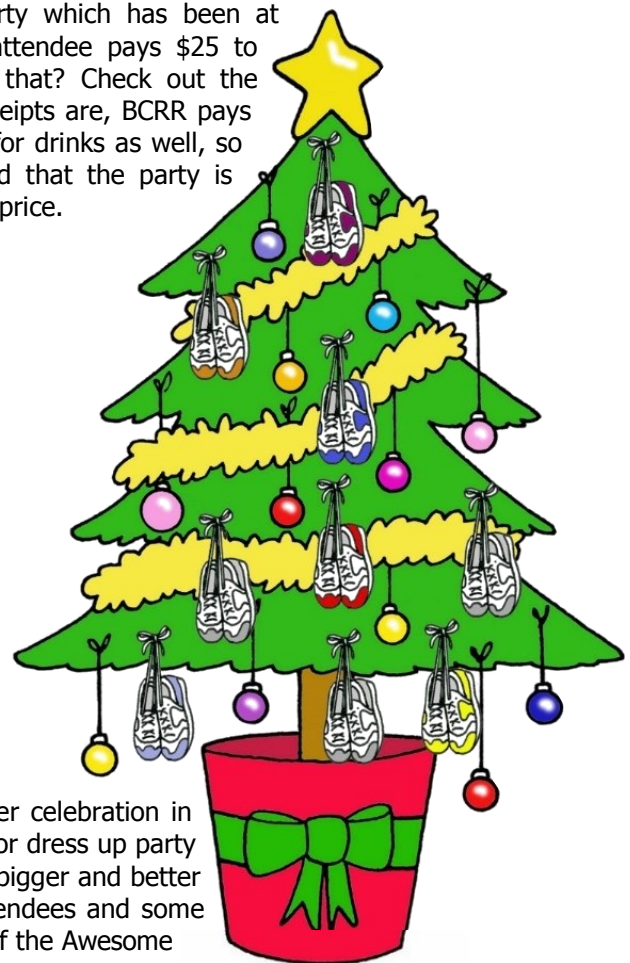
Cadillac Bar - \$4,050

Door Prizes - \$200

Total - \$4,250

\$1,495 collected at door

\$2,755 *subsidized by BCRR*



In the past few years we have also had a different December celebration in the form of the Christmas lights run followed by an ugly sweater or dress up party at the Modern B&B. This Christmas lights run / party has gotten bigger and better each year. Last year on a Wednesday we had close to 100 attendees and some pretty awesome Christmas outfits. **Alonzo Vargas** is the king of the Awesome

www.zazzle.co.uk/katetaylor (Continued on page 2)

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Bayou City Road Runners
P. O. Box 925534
Houston, TX 77292

Editor

Joe Lengfellner

The Dream Garden LLC

ThatsJoesMail@Gmail.com

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BCRR Board of Directors

President

Lisa Thompson

prez@bcrr.org

Vice President

Andrew Young

young.andrew.joseph@gmail.com

Secretary

Lynn McGrew

lecraig77@gmail.com

Treasurer

Peter Griffiths

p_griffiths@bellsouth.net

Member at Large

Catie Cohen

catiecohen130@gmail.com

Member at Large

Katie Decker

katie.h.decker@gmail.com

Member at Large

Terry Fanning

tfanning_houston1@comcast.net

Member at Large

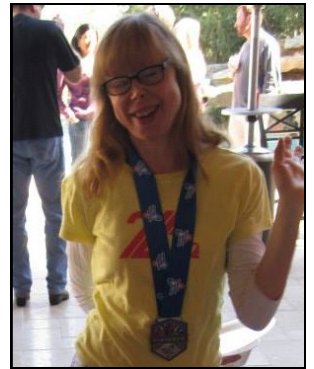
Christina Jones

Cmjones927@gmail.com

Member Database

Has your contact info changed recently? Send any updates to young.andrew.joseph@gmail.com.

From the President



Christmas Party

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Christmas sweaters.

After discussions with a number of club members the board has decided to move the Christmas light run to a Friday night and make it the annual BCRR Christmas party. The lights run will be at the Rose garden starting at 6 PM. The party starts at 8 PM. This will be our formal Christmas party with hor'douvres from Revival Market, A signature drink, a keg of good beer, wine and champagne. We will have a special musical guest and a photo booth. Festive attire either formal dress or Christmas themed. The club will contribute to the party and guest entry is \$10 at the door. We are 360 members strong. I am looking forward to seeing a good number of you at our Christmas party!!!

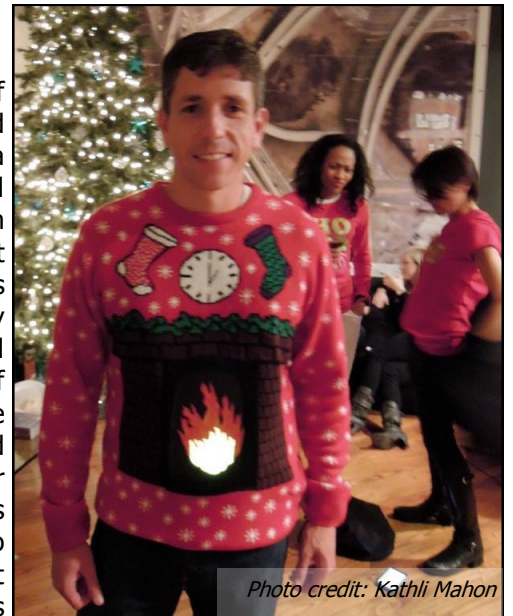


Photo credit: Kathli Mahon

Alonzo Vargas 2014 Winner Ugly Model

↑
sweater

Lets' have the biggest best BCRR Christmas celebration ever.

May all your miles be merry!

Lisa

POST A STORY IN THE BCRR NEWSLETTER

We want to hear from YOU. Feel free to send your stories (or simple notes) to the editor at thatsjoesmail@yahoo.com and we'll put YOU in the next newsletter! Deadline for submission is the **20th of the month** for the following month's edition.

ADVERTISING INFO

How would you like to see your own ad in the Bayou City Road Runners Newsletter? For all personal or business advertising inquiries, please send an email to the Treasurer at susancita.bcrr@gmail.com.

BCRR Family Fun Day



Christina Jones

September 20, BCRR hosted its first annual *Family Fun Day* picnic. Over 40 people joined in on this Sunday afternoon event, drawing a crowd including kids, grand kids, and even furry kids. Herman Park was the perfect setting for sandwiches, cold drinks, and games. The games included: soccer, hula hoops, and face painting. The prep work for this fun event was limited to a few strong men (**Peter Griffiths** and **Andrew Young**) to set up tables and HEB to fix our lunch - resulting in an afternoon of family fun! The BCRR Board hopes to make this a returning event - one that is fun for all members of your family (not just the runners). Thank you to all who attended our first *BCRR Family Fun Day!*



Photo credit: Christina Jones

Above and below, **Hillary Camp** (one of BCRR's newest members) helps the children have fun with face-painting.

At left, **Matthew Nicol** teaches the fine art of hula-hoping.



Photo credit: Avi Moss



Photo credit: Christina Jones

Bel Inizio: The Power of Running



Catie Cohen

I recently had the great pleasure of dining with an amazingly inspirational woman named Theresa Strong (kick-ass name, right?). You all may remember her from a summer night at Valhalla after a Wednesday run. Theresa is the founder of Bel Inizio, a non-profit organization that helps “disadvantaged women develop life skills and self-confidence through physical fitness and nutrition.” Bel Inizio means beautiful beginning in Italian and that is exactly what Theresa is providing. A new sense of self-worth and empowerment through what we all know has been, and continues to be, a powerful source in our lives: running. Not just running, but everything that goes along with it: from proper nutrition and hydration, to signing up and training for a race, to crossing that finish line and celebrating, Theresa brings that sense of accomplishment to people who may not know that such a feeling exists. After leaving the Italian restaurant, La Vista, that evening, I felt positively inspired and energized by her passion and perseverance. Getting to know Theresa and her organization was such a treat and I hope that you all enjoy it just as much as I did.



*Note to reader: To get an experience most like that of mine that evening, please open a bottle of wine, play some cool jazz, and kick-back.

First, let's get to know a little bit more about **Theresa Strong**:

Born: Pontiac, Michigan

Moved to Houston: 1977 with her family

Education: UT in the Medical Center

Bachelor Degrees: Business Administration, and German

Graduate Degrees: Masters of Fine Arts & Masters of Instructional Design

Favorite Running Song: Born to Run by Bruce Springsteen

Running Shoe of Choice: Asics

Proudest Running Accomplishment: PR of 4:52 at White Rock in Dallas

Toughest Race: American River 50 Miler (DNF'ed with hypothermia 3 miles to the finish)

Marathons Run: >50 (so many she has lost count)

Favorite Recovery Food/Beverage: Breakfast tacos/mimosas



When did you start running? *I started running when I was 40 after cheering my sister on while she ran the Houston marathon. I saw her laughing and having a great time and thought, hey, I want to do that. Shortly thereafter I was signed up for my first marathon, realized how hard it actually was and became addicted.*

*If you are currently wondering how old Theresa is to have run 50+ marathons since she was 40, stop, because you may never ask a lady her age. But it is truly incredible to have run that many marathons (not including two 50 milers) in 16 years. :P

What made you want to start Bel Inizio? *In 2009, I lost my husband Tom to brain cancer. It was devastating. We were married 10 years. Just 2 months later, the company that I was working for went bankrupt. With medical bills and my loss of employment, I was no longer able to do yoga, pilates, or be a member of a gym. So I turned exclusively to running. During the day, I would look for a full-time job and run. Then at night I would volunteer at a homeless shelter because you know volunteering is an awful good way to get out of yourself and nights were really long. I knew I was doing good by serving people food, checking them in, or making their beds but felt that I could be doing a lot better by giving them the same boost that I was getting from exercising.*

And so the research began. I quickly discovered that no shelters in Houston had a program like this. I talked with case managers, program directors, and people at running stores who all thought it was a great idea. The research and personal experience (as we can all relate) pointed to self-confidence through physical health as what was missing from the recovery path. So in 2009, while working some full-time jobs, I started exploring and forming this non-profit. By 2010 I

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Continued

had a leadership team together and in 2011 Bel Inizio got its non-profit status.

What does the Bel Inizio program look like for participants? *Bel Inizio is an 8 week training and nutrition program. It starts with a kick-off session, 8 weeks of training, race day, and then graduation. There are 3 different seasons of training, Fall, Spring, and Summer in which 8 different organizations per year participate (Santa Maria Hostel, Brigid's Hope, Star of Hope, and Dress for Success, to name a few). The entirety of Bel Inizio's logistics, planning, and fundraising are coordinated by myself, the board, and volunteers. In 2014 I was able to be a full-time employee for Bel Inizio, everyone else involved is a volunteer.*

How do you implement the nutrition aspect? *Varies based on the organization. We have a lesson at the beginning of the first 6 workouts that we gear specifically towards the circumstances of the client. We have people who may be served corn dogs, green beans, and French fries for dinner. We would advise them to take the corn off of the dog, or to eat salad instead of French fries, or to take an apple and eat it before dinner so that you feel fuller. There are also some clients who have access to a kitchen or live in an apartment. For them, we are able to be more focused and specific for their nutrition plan.*

Why the name "Bel Inizio"? *During the time that Bel Inizio was forming, I was reading Bel Canto by Ann Patchett, my favorite book. It is about an opera singer taken hostage in Argentina, it is about relationships, it is almost about nothing but it is just so well written. I loved the name and loved the book so much that I thought it would be a great name for a non-profit. But of course, we have nothing to do with singing so I spent some time with an Italian dictionary and that is when I found Bel Inizio, which means beautiful beginning.*

What is one of your favorite client success stories? *Beth from Santa Maria Hostel came from a good family, but had made a lot of poor decisions in her life. She had possession of 1 out of 2 children and was not in a good place. She wound up going through 2-3 Bel Inizio programs and fell in love with working out. Each program she got better and better. She would even hold boot camps for her peers at Santa Maria. When she left the hostel, she became a personal trainer, gained possession of both of her children, and continues to work out regularly. She also works incredibly hard to share with other people how exercise and good nutrition have made a difference in her life and for her family.*

If you were to get \$500,000 for Bel Inizio, what would you do with it? *We would revise our strategic plan and we would focus a lot more on strengthening infrastructure. We would get a program manager who could focus on program management and expansion. Definitely determine what the best city is to do another Bel Inizio program.*

Have you ever had a time when you were unable to reach a client? *There are a lot of times that we are unable to reach clients. Often times, they think that we want something from them. In their lives no one gives them anything for free and their mentality is very much that of a victim, which sometimes they are and sometimes they are not. We have to convince them that we are looking to give them something, not take anything. We have to inspire the clients and show them that what we do really really matters... To them. It can change their lives.*

And it does. Since 2010 Bel Inizio has helped over 30 teams of women (and some co-ed groups) battle various struggles in their lives by helping them build self-esteem that will allow them to re-enter society. A proven way to build self-esteem is by "setting and achieving measurable goals, acknowledging self-improvement, and learning the tools to keep moving forward".

By the time Theresa and I had nearly finished a veggie pizza and $\frac{3}{4}$ of a bottle of wine, I was in absolute awe. I was in admiration of just the idea of Bel Inizio, I was amazed at how she had turned her struggles into this tool to lift others up, and I was honored to have learned the details of her hardships and know that I get to share it with the Bayou City Road



(Continued on page 7)

BCRR Members Bike Around the Bay



Lynn McGrew

During the two days October 17-18, BCRR members **Lynn and Chris McGrew, Andrew Young, Lauren Wilder, and Jesman Devia** participated in *Bike Around the Bay*, benefitting the *Galveston Bay Foundation*. This is an annual 2-day cycling event that circumnavigates Galveston Bay, starting in East Houston near Baytown, stopping at Moody Gardens in Galveston overnight and continuing north through Seabrook and LaPorte on Day 2. The ride affords beautiful views of Anahuak Wildlife Preserve, Bolivar Peninsula, and Clear Lake, amongst others. It



Photo credit: Chris McGrew

Above: **Lynn McGrew** is all thumbs up and smiles to be the first woman to cross the finish on Day 1.

Left: The sunrise from the seat of a bike never looked better!

Below: **Lauren Wilder, Andrew Young and Chris McGrew** are ready to roll into the wind on Day 2.



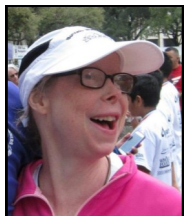
Photo credit: Lynn McGrew

also gives an opportunity to take a ferry across the bay, and ride over Galveston Causeway and the Fred Hartman Bridge. The ride is always challenging, yet thoroughly enjoyable, since there are about 1,000 cyclists and a well-supported course. Riding around the Bay makes us appreciate the beauty of our waterways, and the funds raised from this event help keep them clean and healthy for all to enjoy.



Photo credit: Lynn McGrew

Lisa Thompson Invited to USABA Cycling Development Camp



Lisa Thompson

Eighteen athletes from across the United States participated in the *USABA Cycling Development Camp* at the *United States Olympic Training Center* in Colorado Springs during the week of September 20-27. Paralympian Pam Fernandes and Coach Jim Alvord instructed stokers and pilots on riding techniques, racing etiquette, and bike handling skills. BCRR's own **Lisa Thompson** was one of the eighteen athletes invited to participate in the prestigious program. Among the other athletes, were eight Adaptive Sports competitors. "Adaptive Sports"



features U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs athletes from various branches of the military.
#MissionReDefined?



Lisa Thompson (in yellow in all pictures) participating in the *USABA Cycling Development Camp* in Colorado. Lisa serves as "stoker" while the "pilot" up front steers.



Bel Inizio

(Continued from page 5)

Runners club members.

Each week, some of us run Memorial on Mondays or the bayou on Wednesdays, some of us stop by Vahalla for a beer, and some of us go to the Friday happy hour. Every member of BCRR has a reason for joining, for running, and for continuing to show their support for the club. After meeting with Theresa, I realized that every single person in our run club has had a hardship in their life (or many).

Each person knows the power that running has on our physical, mental, and emotional health. Each person uses running as a tool to build self-esteem, to cultivate meaningful relationships, and to get through that tough day, that loss, or that life-altering event. Theresa has harnessed that feeling we all get from being part of a run club and provided it to those who didn't know such a feeling existed or even where to find it. Theresa's story and organization serves as a reminder that running "helps [us all] prepare for the ultimate race – the race for a better life."

Faces & Places



On November 14 *Alex's 5K* debuted at a new location, MacGregor Park. The course was beautiful and so was the day. Ideal running conditions brought out more than 500 participants. Kudos to Race Director **Lara Allen** and her team of volunteers—like **Larry Jensen** shown here. Learn more about BCRR's favorite 5K at www.alex5k.com.

The *Rocket's Run* (on 11/8) was another testament to the volunteer spirit of BCRR members. The club provided about 50 volunteers (managed by **Susan Cita**). BCRR also provided speedy runners! **Allyson Serrao**, rocked it for top overall female. **David Piper** won first in his age group, and **Will Henderson** won third in his



age group. **Allyson Serrao**, ALSO won top overall female at the HMSA 25K on November 22. **Larry Lindeen** took top honors in his age group at the 25K, and **David Piper** finished third among his peers.



The four person two mile relay on the hills of Spotts Park enjoyed good weather and good results! Several BCRR members won awards. The club also debuted a beautiful new purple tent.

The September 26 HARRA *Cross Country Relay* brought out the BCRR troops in big numbers!

The four



Beverly Handy, The Marathon Goddess, placed 4th in her division at the *Disneyland Half Marathon* on September 6th. The 4th place plaque added to her 2nd place plaque from the 10K the day before. In addition, she took 4th place in the women's Military division, and 2nd in the women's Military 10K. **Dexter Handy** (AKA, Baymax) happily reports finishing in the middle in both races, which is "better than finishing dead last" he notes. "Kenyan Way Training & Carbo Pro rocks!"

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>ACTIVITY</u>
12/11	Houston, TX (River Oaks Rose Garden)	BCRR Christmas Lights Run
12/11	Houston, TX (Modern B & B)	BCRR Christmas Party
12/13	Sugarland, TX	FLS 30K*
12/13	Houston, TX (Tellepsen Family YMCA)	Jingle Bell Run**
12/27	Houston, TX (John Phillips home)	John's Loooong Run
1/17/16	Houston, TX (GRB Convention Center)	Chevron Houston Marathon*
2/27/16	Houston, TX	ConocoPhillips Rodeo Run

*Official HARRA race series event.

**BCRR seeking volunteers



BAYOU CITY ROAD RUNNERS
P O BOX 66196
HOUSTON TX 77266-0196

