

GO THE DISTANCE

with Running for Fitness



Photo by Josh Lockridge/PR Races

This time last year, Amy Nave stepped out of her comfort zone and embarked on a fitness journey that she wasn't sure she could finish. The goal was inadvertently inspired by her physician.

"I was at my doctor's office for an appointment and saw a poster of her participating in a 5K, and I thought that if this was something she is doing, maybe it would be good for me, too," she recalled. "Then I wondered, what do I do? Where do I begin? I had never run before in a race in my life."

Nave says she discovered the answers in the Running for Fitness class at South Run RE-Center. The class is designed to get participants ready for a 5K race, and although the then 49-year-old Fairfax County public school teacher wasn't sure she could go the distance, she decided to give the class a try.

"When I first took the class, I could barely run at all, and the people who had been in the class for a long time encouraged me to stick with it saying, 'I was once where you are,'" she said. "It kept me very much motivated, and I just love it!"

The Saturday morning class begins with the full group learning together. Students are first introduced to something new, such as a new running concept or different stretching exercises. Then the class breaks up into smaller groups based on experience level."

"If you're an experienced runner you do a certain workout, and if you're a beginning runner you do a different workout," Nave said. "Ellen, the instructor, is very knowledgeable about running and fitness, and the class runs a lot on the Burke Lake Park trails, which is a beautiful setting."

Less than four months after starting the class, Nave decided to test her running skills by participating in Park Authority's Healthy Strides 5K Race at Burke Lake Park. Though she was still new to running, she finished well, in the middle of the women's field of 194 runners.

"That was a surprise," she said with astonishment. "It was my very first 5K, and my goal was just to be able to finish the race."

Since then, Nave has made her health and fitness a priority by staying the course in Running for Fitness class and by participating in several other 5K community races. Now, at age 50, she's looking forward to celebrating her one-year fitness anniversary by running in the Healthy Strides Race again this year, perhaps in the 10K.

"I was an athlete as a young girl, and as we get older, life gets in the way with work and school and we put exercise or health on the back burner," she said. "I'm glad I found it again because what really counts is your health. If you have your health, you have everything. It has to be a priority."

HEALTHY STRIDES 2020

Mark your calendar for May 2 for this year's Healthy Strides 5K/10K at Burke Lake Park! For details and to register, visit <https://potomac.enmotive.com/events/register/2020-healthy-strides-5k-10k>.

