

Green Bay races console couple after daughter's death

Marathon expo expected to draw about 15,000

BY CORINTHIA MCCOY cmccoy@greenbaypressgazette.com May 17, 2008

An unfortunate circumstance led Ed and Sharon Pierson of St. Charles, Mo., to participate in marathons.

On March 13, 2003, their 36-year-old daughter, a runner, was killed in a car accident. The couple now use marathons to keep their daughter's legacy alive, at times wearing T-shirts bearing their daughter's picture or a picture of a pair of shoes and the date of her death.

"If it wasn't for her, we probably wouldn't be doing this," Ed Pierson said. "She can't run anymore, so we'll run for her."

The Piersons were among the expected 15,000 attendees receiving registration packets, scoping out deals on merchandise and getting last-minute advice at the Prevea Health and Fitness Expo for Sunday's Cellcom Green Bay Marathon.

The expo started at 4 p.m. Friday and will continue at 10 a.m. today. It will include the traditional pasta dinner and is being held over two days for the first time.

The Piersons, who have participated in 33 half marathons, made their first visit to Green Bay.

"It helped me in terms of getting over the accident and dealing with it," Ed Pierson said.

Sharon Pierson will have to cheer her husband on this go-around, as she was put on crutches Wednesday after an injury.

Cheering is what Mary Jo Kohl of Appleton plans to do when her husband runs the full marathon and her son runs the half marathon.

Kohl was at the cheer station Friday making a sign to display as the two sweat it out in the race.

"Just giving them support along the way," she said.

Debbie Goff of Green Bay said she hopes this year she's in better shape to walk in the 5K. The second-time participant said last year's walk was challenging because she was out of shape, but she hopes walking the Las Vegas strip was training enough to help her through the walk.

"I'm in a little bit better shape than last year," she said. "I hope."