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**KAISER PERMANENTE NAPA VALLEY MARATHON:  
ENTRANT PROFILE STORIES**

*35th Annual Race Draws Inspiring Participants*

NOTE TO EDITORS: Short profile stories are included in this release about the following Napa Valley Marathon entrants. We will gladly provide you with additional information about these entrants or other entrants. [Ole Arne Eiksund](#) (Oslo, Norway), [Molly Bouressa](#) and “Team John” (Appleton, Wisconsin), [Kristin Kakes](#) (San Jose, Calif.), [Jeff Rosado](#) (Sunnyvale, Calif.), [Sergey Sirotenko](#) (Moscow, Russia), [Danny Heinsohn](#) (Reno, Nev.), [Thane Gilmour](#) (Half Moon Bay, Calif.), [Leslie Haverstock](#) (Santa Cruz, Calif.), [Karen Slattery](#) (Indianapolis, Ind.), [Lisa Gesualdo](#) (Bel Air, Md.), [Tom Prichard](#) (Newcastle, England), [Mark Ramirez](#) (San Ramon, Calif.), [Sari Tepper](#) (New York, NY), [Lisa Martin](#) (San Francisco, Calif.), [Glenn Unsicker](#) (Napa, Calif.) and [Lisa Unsicker-Prestwood](#) (Antelope, Calif.), [Lauren Warren](#) and [Bruce Warren](#) (Holland, Mich.), [Mike Urbina](#) (Chicago, Ill.), [Linda Eudy](#) (Pleasanton, Calif.), [Dan Marinsik](#) (San Jose, Calif.).

**NAPA, Calif.** — February 8, 2013 — A sold-out field of 2,600 entrants from 16 countries, 45 U.S. states, and Washington, D.C. will gather in California’s Napa Valley for the 35th Annual Kaiser Permanente Napa Valley Marathon on Sunday, March 3, 2013. The Napa Valley Marathon (NVM) asks each entrant to describe on their entry form their reasons for entering the race. The responses, of course, are varied. Many, however, touch upon the themes of how the challenge of a 26.2-mile race spurs marathoners to undertake charitable deeds that assist others who face adversity, or overcome personal adversities themselves.

Running USA, a non-profit organization created in 1999 to serve the running industry, observed in its 2012 “State of the Sport Report” that *Running and Charity are becoming so synonymous that you almost cannot mention one without the other. While the exact number of charity runners*

*in the United States is not available, there is no doubt that part of the increase in road race entrants over the past decade has been driven by charitable running.*

Every Napa Valley Marathon participant assists important local causes. All proceeds from the Napa Valley Marathon (a non-profit organization) are donated to local charities and schools in the Napa Valley region. Numerous NVM participants, however, choose to go beyond NVM's annual philanthropy by dedicating their race to others, often raising donations that fund the charities of their choice.

“As the largest sporting event in Napa County, our marathon comes at the right time of year,” NVM Co-Event Director David Hill commented. “It’s a quiet time in Napa Valley and for tourism. The marathon’s economic impact of four million dollars over four or five days is a lot of money during the winter, or ‘Cabernet,’ season.”

“We certainly welcome runners who participate while raising money and support for additional worthwhile causes (outside of Napa Valley),” NVM Co-Event Director Rich Benyo added. “Running a marathon for a favorite charity, or for a beloved person, or group of people in need gives you more focus. It’s almost like you’re running the race with a friend out there encouraging you. We all perform better when we extend ourselves for someone else.”

Last year, *Forbes Travel Guide* rated NVM among the top ten marathons in the world “worth traveling for.” *Runner’s World* magazine selected NVM as one of the top ten U.S. marathons for first-time marathon participants in its January, 2011 issue. American Express' *Departures* magazine declared the NVM as #7 in their “ten travel-worthy races that make for truly memorable journeys on the run.”

Historically, a remarkable 30 percent of NVM's 2,600 entrants are first-time marathoners. NVM's fast, point-to-point, USA Track & Field certified (for accurate distance) marathon course through the scenic Napa Valley has attracted numerous devotees.

## **NVM ENTRANT PROFILE STORIES**

The Kaiser Permanente Napa Valley Marathon asks each marathon registrant to submit a short “interesting story” about their reasons for running the 26.2-mile race. A selection of these stories appears below.

**Ole Arne Eiksund** (45, Oslo, Norway) will run his 57th marathon at NVM in honor of legendary Norwegian distance runner Grete Waitz, and to raise awareness about the Active Against Cancer Foundation. Waitz, a nine-time New York City Marathon champion, Olympic silver medalist, and four-time world record holder, co-founded the organization before

succumbing to a six-year battle with cancer in 2011. Active Against Cancer raises funds that support training and activity centers for cancer patients while encouraging physical activity to help prevent the disease. Eiksund met Waitz for the first time in 2006 at his first marathon, and has been involved in the organization ever since.

“Seeing Grete’s legendary status in the U.S. made a great impression on me,” Eiksund said. “I will never forget her determination, dedication, strength, focus, and fierce fight against cancer. Traveling from Oslo to Napa to honor her is like a dream come true for me. Also, I’m a big fan of Napa Valley wines.”

Appleton, Wisconsin-based “Team John,” composed of **Molly Bouressa**, 27, **Chris Bouressa**, 54, and **Laure Kline**, 50, chose NVM to support their friend, **Deb John**, who was diagnosed with chronic myeloid leukemia in January, 2012. Following five months of treatment, John, accompanied by her support team, tackled an ambitious schedule of 5K, 10K, and half marathon running races, plus a 150-mile bike ride in which they raised over \$8,000 for the Wisconsin Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

Team John, however, will undertake their next challenge (NVM) without their friend. Last December, John had to abort her marathon training because of ruptured blood cells caused by chemotherapy in combination with the pounding from running.

“Nevertheless, our team will still be participating (in NVM) in Deb’s honor,” Molly Bouressa said.

Said John: “The one thing about having cancer is nobody should have to fight alone. From the moment I was diagnosed I knew I was blessed with an outstanding support team. What I can't achieve alone, I can with my team.”

Last fall, when **Kristin Kakes** (35, San Jose, Calif.) learned that Jay Lawson—her friend and colleague at Cupertino High School—had been diagnosed with an aggressive form of multiple sclerosis she was at a loss about how she could help. The disease forced the beloved history teacher and wrestling coach to retire in December following a nearly 37-year career in education. So, Kakes wrote Lawson’s name on the back of her shirt and wore it while running in last October’s San Francisco Nike Women’s Marathon in which she participated as a team captain for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society’s Team in Training program.

“Thinking about Jay and the tough road ahead of him helped get me through many of the difficult miles,” Kakes said. “If he can fight MS, I can get through the pain and fight, too.”

Subsequently, Kakes organized a group of about 15 educators in her Fremont Union High School District, most of whom have not run a marathon, to run the 2013 NVM as a way of honoring Lawson. She started a Facebook group through which she helped communicate training runs and training strategies. Lawson will attend NVM and watch his colleagues honor him.

“This (NVM) will be my first marathon,” said **Jeff Rosado** (41, Sunnyvale, Calif.), who worked with Lawson for the past seven years in Cupertino High School’s Social Studies department before becoming an Assistant Principal at nearby Fremont High School in Sunnyvale. “During the pain of my long training runs, I’ve found great strength while thinking about all the things that Jay has taught me, and how lucky I am to be healthy enough to try and complete a marathon.”

**Sergey Sirotenko** (31, Moscow, Russia) is motivated to travel to the Napa Valley for his first marathon by his desire to promote children’s mentoring in Russia. Sirotenko is a Co-Chairman and board member for the Russian chapter of Big Brothers Big Sisters International, an organization that operates in all 50 U.S. states and 12 counties to provide adult mentors for children facing adversities. Sirotenko is particularly concerned about the welfare of his country’s children in the wake of a controversial Russian ordinance that went into effect on January 1 banning the adoption of Russian children by U.S. citizens.

“I have heard that the Kaiser Permanente Napa Valley Marathon is very well organized and a fast one which is good for my first,” said Sirotenko who also assists the organizing committee for the 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi, Russia as a consultant for PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC, the Games official Professional Services Provider). “I will promote my run in Napa, and my message about children’s mentoring, via social media with well over 1,000 Facebook friends, PR support from Big Brothers Big Sisters in Russia, PwC, and other means.”

In 1999, **Danny Heinsohn** (37, Reno, Nev.) was diagnosed with a brain tumor the size of a racquetball which was removed four days later. He had primary central nervous system lymphoma, a rare and aggressive variation of cancer that originates in the brain, and he underwent an entire year of chemotherapy. He forced himself to read and type again one slow word at a time. Heinsohn is 13 years into cancer remission, and has written a book about his ordeal that will be published in March. Now, Heinsohn, who was very active in team sports throughout high school and college, has completed five marathons. NVM will be his sixth. He owns a personal best of 3 hours, 23 minutes, and 38 seconds and aims to qualify for the Boston Marathon.

“Beyond endurance events, it’s my hope that my book and speaking engagements will act as a marketing platform to inspire others, raise money to fund health education programs, and provide financial aid to young cancer survivors who want to pursue a college education,” Heinsohn said.

**Thane Gilmour** (41, Half Moon Bay, Calif.) is intent upon making his first marathon a special one. The British citizen is raising \$10,000 to build a school just outside of Dar es Salaam, the largest city in the impoverished east African nation of Tanzania. Already, Gilmour has raised \$4,000 to lay the foundation for the school while bicycling the Etape du Tour (a challenging 100-mile mountain stage of the Tour de France) in 2011. He is running NVM to raise an additional \$6,000 to complete the school, and will create a website to take donations.

“I see schools as giving the next generation a hope for something better,” Gilmour commented. “I suppose that having been a teacher for six years, and having a three-year-old son of my own, I see how we shape our lives by the experiences we have. I just want to give others a chance to have some of the valuable experiences I’ve benefited from.”

NVM entrant **Leslie Haverstock** (38, Santa Cruz, Calif.) is a veteran Special Education teacher of 16 years for the Santa Clara County Office of Education. Her students are six to eight years old.

“I run because I can,” Haverstock said. “My students have severe physical and cognitive disabilities. They would love to know how it feels to walk let alone run.”

Haverstock says she ran in high school, and a bit in college, but didn't start running faithfully until 2004 when she set her sights on the Chicago Marathon. She dedicated that first marathon to Alex, one of her students who diligently checked in with her about her progress every Monday after her long weekend training runs. “Someday, I’m going to run a marathon, too,” Alex told his teacher. He subsequently participated in several 5K races in a motorized wheelchair before passing away.

Haverstock has now participated in numerous marathons, at least one per year. She continued: “When I think the training gets hard, or something hurts, I look at my students. They were not given strong limbs and the abilities to move about freely. Why would I take it for granted or complain that I *had* to go run? For these reasons, I run because I can. I'm very blessed.”

**Karen Slattery** (Indianapolis, Ind.) also ran her first marathon at Chicago in 2004, at the age of 50. Now 59, Slattery has achieved her goal of finishing a marathon in all 50 U.S. states after completing the Honolulu Marathon last December. Slattery is a member of the 50 States

Marathon Club, a group of runners who share a common goal of finishing marathons in all 50 states.

“Even though I’ve accomplished my goal, I still want to run marathons,” Slattery related. “I want to continue with the healthy lifestyle I started almost twenty years ago. In the past, I chose marathons because they fit into my schedule. Now, I’ve decided to run marathons that have good reputations and sound nice and scenic. The Napa Valley Marathon fits those criteria.”

**Lisa Gesualdo** (43, Bel Air, Md.) also accomplished a 50 states marathon quest in December, 2012. Gesualdo and several of her female friends in the 50 States Marathon Club chose NVM to celebrate their feat.

“The most satisfying aspect for me has been inspiring others to start running and set challenging goals for themselves, from 5Ks to marathons,” said Gesualdo who is a part-time physician in a pediatric emergency room at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore.

In 2011, Gesualdo, started a running club for elementary and middle school children at The Highlands School (Bel Air, MD). Her 10-year-old son attends the school.

**Tom Prichard** (25, Newcastle, England) suffered a serious injury playing soccer in 2008 at the University of Newcastle where he is in his final year of medical school. Doctors told a distraught Prichard that he would never play soccer or run again because the injury was highly likely to re-occur. Prichard, however, was determined to come back. Following two years of rigorous physiotherapy, intense treatments, and hours of rehab exercising in the gym, he entered the 2010 Great North Run half marathon in Newcastle—Great Britain’s largest participation event with 55,000 entrants. Prichard finished in 1 hour and 52 minutes. Since then, he has completed a number of half marathons in the United Kingdom and the London Marathon.

Why has Prichard chosen to travel 5,000 miles to participate in the 2013 Napa Valley Marathon? “Who dares to argue with the picturesque landscape, the rolling vineyards, and the support of the American people?” said Prichard who saw the Napa Valley for the first time last year on what he calls “a fleeting visit.”

**Mark Ramirez** (57, San Ramon, Calif.) says he expects to better his personal best of 2:57:18 at this year’s NVM. Ramirez took up running in 1975 after being rescued from a burning car that left him with second- and third-degree burns over 65 percent of his body. He spent six weeks in a hospital and a year in rehab. Since then, Ramirez has completed 20 marathons and about 20 triathlons.

“I realized after having such a close brush with death that you never know what tomorrow will bring and you should live each day like it is your last—because someday it just might be,” Ramirez said. “Running helps me deal with the memory of the accident because I’m in a position to motivate others by being positive and feeling like I have a second lease on life.”

**Sari Tepper** (25, New York, NY) has chosen NVM as her first marathon. Her sister lives in San Francisco, and Tepper adores the Napa Valley. Tepper, formerly a collegiate gymnast at Cornell, is a graduate student at Columbia University training to be a registered dietician. She has advised numerous athletes in various sports about proper nutrition. After advising a group of runners training for last November’s cancelled New York City Marathon about the role of proper nutrition before, during, and after runs Tepper says “I figure I can better advise marathoners if I actually run one.”

As a youngster, **Lisa Martin** (55, San Francisco, Calif.) starting running in the sixth grade. One of her first role models was 1972 Olympic marathon gold medalist Frank Shorter. She continued running into the 1980s and was captivated when Joan Benoit Samuelson won the inaugural women’s Olympic marathon in Munich in 1984. “After watching Joan, I knew I had to run a marathon,” Martin said. A year later, she ran her first marathon, in San Francisco.

“I think it was having a daughter that prompted me to finally run another marathon,” continued Martin who has now completed four of them. “I wanted her to know that being a mom doesn’t mean the end of being athletic. Looking back on my running career, I realize that I was fortunate to have Frank Shorter and Joan Benoit as inspiration, and that Title IX allowed me to be on the cutting edge of women’s sports.”

Martin will get a chance to meet and chat with Benoit Samuelson, plus female marathon pioneers Jacqueline Hansen, Lorraine Moller, and Nina Kuscsik as NVM honors “Women in Marathoning” at NVM’s Marathon College on Saturday, March 2, the day before the race. The Marathon College will take place at the Napa Valley Marriott Hotel & Spa (host hotel).

Two father-daughter teams described their marathon plans to NVM’s organizers. 80-year-old **Glenn Unsicker** (Napa, Calif.) will complete four decades of marathon running at NVM while running the entire race with his daughter, **Lisa Unsicker-Prestwood** (46, Antelope, Calif.). NVM will be the first marathon that the Unsickers run together. Glenn has 40 completed marathons on his running resume and says he has run NVM “over 15 times.” His best time at NVM (2:48:30) was recorded in 1983 at age 51. Lisa has participated in seven marathons to date.

**Lauren Warren** (19, Holland, Mich.) says she “forced” her father, **Bruce Warren** (49, Holland, Mich.) to run his first half marathon, and now “he’s returning the favor.” Bruce initially got

Lauren into running when Lauren was in the first grade by waking his daughter at 6 a.m. to accompany him on his two-mile training route. Lauren then competed in high school cross country, and has since completed seven half marathons. Last year, as Lauren prepared to head off to college for the first time, she decided to give her dad a special Father's Day present. She gave him a training plan to prepare for his first half marathon, the Rock 'n' Roll Chicago Half Marathon in July.

“He laughed and said there was no way,” Lauren said, “but I managed to guilt him into running it because it would be the last chance we would be able to do something like this and train together for a long time.”

Now, both Warrens plan to tackle their first marathon—at the Napa Valley Marathon—and have been sharing training schedules to prepare for it. Spouse/mother Andrea Warren, 45, will participate in the Kiwanis 5K, held in conjunction with NVM.

In 2007, **Mike Urbina** (33, Chicago, Ill.) nearly died of Wegener's Granulomatosis, a rare autoimmune disease in which blood vessels become inflamed, making it hard for blood to flow. He spent 10 days in a hospital, was put on a chemotherapy program for five months, and received low-dose steroids to reduce inflammation. Although Urbina was completely exhausted and gained 50 pounds, he started a running program because “I knew that if I didn't do something, it was never going to get any better,” he said. At first, he could only walk a mile to and from work each day because he was so weak. When he started running, it took him two months to build up to a mile. He subsequently entered and completed four marathons, three of them at Chicago. NVM will be his fifth.

“Running has been the only thing that made me feel strong and in control of my life,” Urbina said. “My recovery has surprised all of my doctors. I think I owe my recovery entirely to running. If I hadn't done it, I don't know where I'd be today.”

About six years ago, **Linda Eudy** (65, Pleasanton, Calif.) was struggling with a difficult period in her life. “I questioned my worth, how had I made a difference, and what my purpose was,” she said. “Somehow, I lost my joy and excitement for life.”

A friend, Kathy, introduced Eudy to running. She joined a half marathon training group, and has completed several 13.1-mile races. “What I got was a new respect and appreciation for life,” Eudy continued. “I met a group of positive, happy people running for the pure joy of running. I've found an inner peace. I can't think of a better, or more scenic, place than Napa to complete my first marathon at the young age of 65.”



NVM entrant **Dan Marinsik** (54, San Jose, Calif.) has completed 236 marathon and ultramarathon races, despite being diagnosed with a benign brain tumor in 2003 and having it surgically removed. Marinsik is a veteran of the Badwater 135-mile race, a grueling trek that starts below sea level in California's Death Valley and finishes above 8,000 feet at Mt. Whitney Portal. Last year he celebrated his tenth consecutive finish at Badwater by turning around and running back to the start, successfully completing a "Double Badwater" (270 miles).

"Sometimes you don't truly realize how important something is in your life until there's a possibility that it might be taken away," Marinsik commented about his running. "After the surgery, I came back with a passion for running. What seems like life's worse challenge can help you discover who you are."

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For more information about the Kaiser Permanente Napa Valley Marathon, please visit the marathon's web site at [www.napavalley-marathon.org](http://www.napavalley-marathon.org).

The Napa Valley Marathon appreciates generous sponsor support from Kaiser Permanente/Thrive, Gatorade, ASICS, Silverado Trail Wineries Association, *Marathon & Beyond*, Visit Napa Valley, Napa County California, Road Runners Club of America, USA Track & Field, MarathonFoto, Napa Valley Marriott Hotel & Spa, GU, CBS 5 and The CW, XFINITY, Napa Valley Register, KVVN/99.3 The Vine, KVON 1440 AM, Napa Running Company, KCBS 740 AM, Arrowhead Water, Wallaby Organic, Running USA, Hurley's Restaurant, Southgate Mini Storage, Napa Smith Brewery.

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