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**PIONEER PRESS**

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Posted on Sun, Nov. 21, 2004

**Profile: Mary Anderson Who she is: The 37-year-old Eagan resident is...**

Profile: Mary Anderson Who she is: The 37-year-old Eagan resident is event organizer for Lifetime Fitness in Eden Prairie and owner of her own company, Anderson Race Management. She was president of the Twin Cities Marathon board of directors from 1999 through 2001.

What she does: Anderson began working at Lifetime Fitness more than two years ago. She started Anderson Race Management in 1996 and has volunteered at races since 1990. She has done a fair amount of running herself, including 11 marathons.

Employing approximately 15 people, her company is capable of managing every aspect of a race, Anderson said. In 2004, Anderson's company participated in managing 50 races — from 3-milers to half-marathons. A lot goes into organizing an entire race, Anderson said. Her company will consult with organizations, select a venue and route length, appeal to an audience, get permits and approvals for the route, create and distribute entry forms, obtain sponsors and volunteers, set up the course, start the race, compile results, host an awards ceremony and send the results to local media.

At Lifetime Fitness, Anderson does the same type of work, except compiling results. She said she loves what she does. "A lot of people get really stressed out, but to me, it's a lot of fun," Anderson said. "Of course, there are a few stressful moments now and then, but you have to roll with the punches."

One of those punches is bad weather, especially in winter. During a New Year's Day race in 2002, 5-gallon jugs of water began to freeze. The St. Paul Winter Carnival's Half-Marathon, which Anderson has directed along with the celebration's Frozen 5K run since 1999, became a quarter-marathon last year because of the cold.

Why she does it: Anderson said she has been running since high school. "It's my relaxer, my stress reliever," Anderson said. "I plan the whole world out when I run."

But lately, knee problems have prevented her from running as much as she used to. "I try to get out and do some walking," Anderson said. "I've done a couple of races in the past year where I ran really slowly."

Anderson said her knee problems were one motivation for managing races. When she started volunteering in the early 1990s, she said, she found a sense of fulfillment in giving back to the activity she loved. "I couldn't participate as much as I wanted to anymore, so this still allows me to be part of the event and get just about as much enjoyment out of it as participating," she said.

One of the races she directs is in her hometown of Madelia, Minn. The race, called Herman's Run, began the year her father died of prostate cancer. The proceeds go to the Madelia Hospice, where her father stayed during his last few weeks. "That one's very close to my heart," Anderson said.

Anderson said she hopes, someday, to make Anderson Race Management her only job. "The feeling I got the first time I ran a race, the first time I ran a marathon, definitely, you can see that on people's faces," she said.

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