

**DOUBLE
THE DOLLARS**
**DOUBLE
THE DIFFERENCE**



TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE **CINCO DE MAYO TRAIL RUN** MATCHING PROGRAM



The Foundation is grateful to our Technology Sponsor, the Todd and Mari Gutschow Family Foundation. Our sponsor pledged to match financial donations made by Valley parents or grandparents, families or friends.

If you become a benefactor of the 9th Annual Trail Run, scheduled for May 2 at Lake Poway, your \$10 donation will turn into \$20. Your \$25 will turn into \$50 and your \$50 will turn into \$100!

The first \$1,000 in contributions will be matched and transformed into \$2,000. So make your tax-deductible gift today to help double the dollars and double the difference!

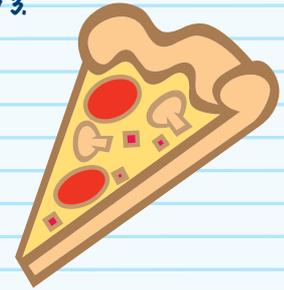
**Go to ValleyEEF.org.
Click Donate Now!**



CLASS COMPETITION

We're challenging all students, teachers and parents to see which classroom can put together the biggest team at the Cinco de Mayo Trail Run on May 3.

The teacher and students with the biggest team will win a pizza party!



To sign up for the Trail Run, go to CincodeMayoTrailRun.org.



TRIBUTE TO TEAMS

At the Cinco de Mayo Trail Run, we celebrate our teams!

Some teams represent professional runners who come to our race every year. Others celebrate school spirit. Some teams run on behalf of their companies and others do it to show civic pride. There are teams that honor the memories of loved ones. And others that mark the achievement of a fitness goal.

Finally, some teams are there to celebrate life's milestones! There are birthday teams, bachelor/bachelorette teams and teams that laud friendships that are sure to last a lifetime. In year's past we've had the Tres Amigos. So far this year, we have a team called the Bamboozelers and even the Team Ninja Frog Warriors!

Join us for the 9th Annual Cinco de Mayo Trail Run on May 2 at Lake Poway. Register today and form a team of your own!

To help you celebrate, we'll reserve exhibit space for teams with 25 or more runners and list your team name on the sponsorship signage. If your team reaches 50 we'll even put your team name on your race shirt! **The deadline is April 17.**

Be among the first to form your team!
We'll see you on the trails!

**READY? SET?
GO TEAMS!**

VIRTUAL RUNNERS CHEERING FROM THE SIDELINES!

Not a runner or walker? You can still be a part of the event! Register as a “virtual” runner at the Cinco de Mayo Trail Run on May 2. This is perfect for grandparents or out-of-town friends and family, who want to support the event, even if they can't be at Lake Poway on race day.

Virtual runners must register before April 17. The fee is \$45 and includes a race shirt.

To register as a virtual runner, go to CincodemayoTrailRun.org today and click on the registration button.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Volunteers are needed to assist with every aspect of the event. So team up with your friends or family and make this an experience you won't forget! Helping out is a great opportunity for local high school students to earn credit for community service.

Get first pick of volunteer spots!

- Go to www.cincodemayotrailrun.org/volunteer
- Click on Volunteer
- Scroll down to find a position that has spots available and looks like a good fit for you.
- Pass the news on to any other friends or family members who want to be part of this fun event!

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT THE TRAIL RUN

DRIVE ATTENDANCE

Recruit your friends, neighbors, co-workers and members of your family to join Valley at the 9th Annual Cinco de Mayo Trail Run. The bigger the team, the more money we'll bring in for students, teachers, classrooms and programs.

BE A SPONSOR OR SECURE A SPONSOR

The Foundation is proud to announce that for the second year in a row, Teradata is our Gold Sponsor. The Foundation also has secured other sponsors, exhibitors and benefactors. You can help us bring in even more! This is a unique opportunity for a company to target key demographics from throughout the region and gain recognition for supporting education.

For more information about how to become a sponsor, e-mail sponsor chair Erinn Tozer at etozer@ValleyEEF.org.

MEET THIS YEAR'S TRAILBLAZER: RHONDA MARTIN

TO JOIN RHONDA MARTIN'S TRAILBLAZER TEAM, GO TO CINCODEMAYOTRAILRUN.ORG.

CHOOSE TEAM NAME RHONDA MARTIN. USE DISCOUNT CODE 2015CDMRHONDA

It all began with a single step.

Rhonda Martin could barely walk 150 steps without feeling out of breath and exhausted. But one day, she got up from the chair where she spent most evenings and started walking.



That was Feb. 7, 2012, and she weighed 457 pounds. Her goal was simple. Walk.

Her journey started in the house — a few extra steps, from room to room. Then she challenged herself to walk 100 steps more each day. She tracked her steps in the warehouse of the plumbing company where she worked. One lap was 30 steps. And each day she'd push herself to do another lap and then another, going a little longer and a little farther.

Eventually, she and her husband, Chuck Martin, decided it was time to dig their electric bikes out of the garage. They drove from their home in El Cajon to Coronado, where the bike paths are flat. She rode her bike, for the first time in a long time, and it was exhilarating.

"It was so freeing," says Martin. "It brought back memories of my childhood and not having a care in the world. That momentum and speed and the feeling of the wind in my face was something I hadn't felt for so long."

In three short years, Martin has lost 277 pounds.

The Cinco de Mayo Trail Run has named Martin its 2015 Trailblazer, an honor bestowed every year on one who is leaving his or her mark in the world of running, breaking boundaries and inspiring others.

"I never would have imagined this. If people told me back then what I'd be doing today, I would've thought they were crazy," says Martin, who invites others to join her Trailblazer team. "It has been an amazing journey. Every time I've stepped out of my comfort zone, something great has happened or someone amazing has come into my life."

Martin cherishes each milestone. There was the day reached her goal of falling below 400 pounds. She read the number 399 on the scale and knew it was just the beginning. Then, there was the day she dipped below 200 and entered a place she called "One derland."

"In the beginning, getting to One derland seemed like an impossible dream," she says. "It was a magic number and as I got closer and closer to it I wanted it more and more. I knew if I ever got under 200, I would never go back."

And she hasn't.

Martin bikes to work most days — 38 miles round trip — and says the two-and-a-half-hour commute is one of her favorite times of the day. She's run eight 5Ks, four half marathons and five sprint triathlons. Now, Martin is training for triathlon season with a goal to do a half Ironman, known as a 70.3, next spring. A half Ironman includes a 1.2-mile swim, a 56-mile bike ride and a 13.1-mile run.

Martin is a brand ambassador for Pedego Electric Bikes. Her story has been shared on "Good Morning America" and her Facebook page, called "Living Instead of Existing," has drawn 21,000 followers from all over the world.

Her followers have watched her transform — from walker to runner to triathlete. She'll never forget her first triathlon. She trained for months. Finally the big day dawned. It was May 4, 2014. It was 4 a.m. It was time to go to the Spring Sprint Triathlon.

However, despite years of hard work and months of training, doubts still swirled in her mind. Sitting in the truck, she contemplated telling her husband she wanted to go home.

But she didn't.

"I forced myself to go," she recalls. "I just wanted to get through the swim. Once I was on my bike I was fine. By the time I got home, I knew I had to sign up for the next race."

Many people have been part of what has become Martin's adventure. There's Angie Alkilani, a high school friend, who's been her biggest cheerleader. There's her personal trainer, Nick Garcia, whom Martin calls "The Kid," and says is the best investment she's made in her life. There's Chris Holley, who introduced her to the world of triathlons. There are her bosses at Master Plumbing and Leak Detection, who outfitted a workout space for their employees and each month cover the registration fees for their employees to compete in a 5K, including the Cinco de Mayo Trail Run, where they'll be part of Martin's Trailblazer team.

And then there's Matt Edman, her running buddy. This summer they'll do the Big Wildlife Run Half Marathon in Anchorage, Alaska.

Martin did it one step at a time, one day at a time, one pound at a time. Today, however, her goals aren't based on the number on a scale or the number on the tag in the collar of a dress. Her goals are based on living life, rather than merely existing.

"I didn't think this would ever happen, but today I can say I'm an athlete. I enjoy my new life. This is the happiest I've ever been," Martin says. "I want people to know that, no matter what, you can change. Just pick one small thing. Just make one small change. Just take one small step and, I promise, it will add up. It will change your life."