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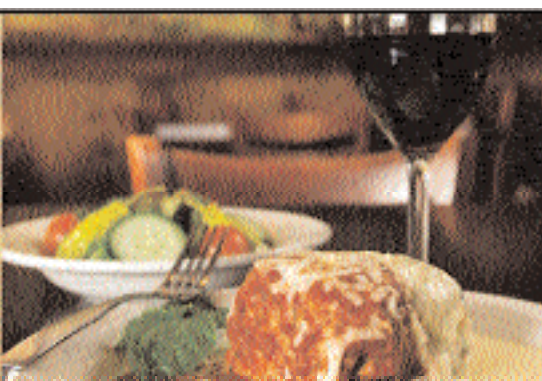
AND THEY'RE OFF

Corporate Challenge teams begin two months of competition >>29

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SPIRITED COMPETITION

Challenge walks off to a great start

BY LISA ZIMMERMANN
neighborsgo editor

Corporate Challenge's 2009 opening ceremony last Friday made it hard for onlookers to remember the event kicked off about 10 weeks of competition.

Attracting hundreds of participants and their families, the city of Richardson event included a Great Walk, torch lighting, Special Olympics parade, tailgating and more.

"It's an opportunity for families to participate," said Carrie Little, who works for the city of Richardson. "Each company gets a point for every person that walks [in the half-mile Great Walk]. It's a big kickoff."

Debbie Cox of Blue Cross Blue Shield said the Richardson, Collin County-based company has about 300 people signed up for different events this year.

"It's just a fun, friendly competition," Cox said. "And at opening cere-



STAFF PHOTO BY LISA ZIMMERMANN

Members from the D4D and Agilent Technologies stand with their special Olympians at the opening ceremony of Richardson's Corporate Challenge. Teams earned points at the ceremony for every person who went on "The Great Walk."

mony we're trying to show our spirit."

Her colleague, Elizabeth Garner, said the best part about Corporate Challenge is to see all the various companies come together in support of Special Olympics.

David Hupp of Fossil in Richardson expressed the same sentiment as Garner.

"The reason why we get such a big turnout is because of Special Olympics," Hupp said.

Hupp added in jest that everyone at Fossil is competitive and Corporate Challenge is a great opportunity to beat other companies.

In the NICE (IEX Corporation) camp, all the employees wore

bright yellow smiley-faced T-shirts.

"My favorite part (about Corporate Challenge) is how it generates team spirit and camaraderie for the companies," said Pam Brungardt of the Richardson, Collin County-based company. "It's a chance to take a break and have some fun."

D4D of Richardson decorated its tent in a Hawaiian Luau theme — including grass skirt decorations and coconut-fashioned bottles for drinks. Nina Lucas said her company only has a hundred people but they will be competing with companies that have 500 employees.

"They may be a bigger company, but we have a bigger heart," she said.

During the two months of competition, employees will represent their companies from horsehoes to kickball and everything in between — some 20 sports in all. The 12th annual event brings out about 8,000 participants on nearly four dozen mostly corporate teams.

"[We get to] see each other in a different way outside the office," said Shaya Hamilton of Debt Settlement of America in Far North Dallas.

Stay tuned for more coverage of Corporate Challenge in neighborsgo.

Lisa Zimmermann can be reached at lzimmermann@neighborsgo.com.

Winner's enthusiasm gives Lennox a boost

BY ROBBIE HAZELBAKER

Cissy McMillan of Frisco, a former softball player at Sam Houston State with a degree in exercise science, is in the midst of another Corporate Challenge.

McMillan, manager of the Lennox International fitness center, is company coordinator for employees competing in the challenge, hosted by Richardson through Oct. 28. Her fundraising counterpart at Lennox is Michelle Nierkirk.

McMillan has two challenges: coming back strong after the birth of her second child and coordinating her second company in four years.



Cissy McMillan

"Last year, I was new to Lennox and was eight months pregnant when I competed in the horseshoe competition," she said. "This year I plan to participate in at least seven events."

While attending high school in Cross Roads, Texas, near Athens, she played golf, basketball and softball, earning a softball scholarship.

Her passion has made her successful in recruiting others.

"The Corporate Challenge is a great tool to do just that," McMillan said. "It's all about getting people in-

involved and, for many, it can be the start of a whole new lifestyle. I encourage everyone in the company to participate in something, whether it's the spirit team or at least one of the 23 events."

Lennox employees were familiar with McMillan before the company contracted her to manage its fitness center. Her team at Hewlett-Packard earned gold in the B Division two consecutive years, 2006 and 2007, with McMillan at the helm.

Lennox, which won its division as a title sponsor in 2005, then finished third in 2006 and fifth in 2007 and 2008, and was ready for a spark. "She's really making a positive dif-

ference in what already was a well-supported event at our company," said Ozzie Buckler, Lennox communications and PR director. "There seems to be new faces on many of the teams, and I am betting that we will surprise some of the other teams and maybe even ourselves."

McMillan and Lennox will compete in the B Division against teams such as "The City Slickers" of Richardson, title sponsor Tektronix, as well as Cisco, Alliance Data, Exco Resources, DRS and Fossil.

Robbie Hazelbaker is assistant director of parks and recreation/events for the City of Richardson.



SCHEDULED EVENTS

AUGUST

Aug 29: Kickball, Breckinridge Park

Aug. 31 to Sept. 3: Tennis, Huffhines Tennis Center

SEPTEMBER

Sept. 8-10: Billiards, Main Event, Plano

Sept. 11-13: Softball, Heritage Yards, Plano

Sept. 13: Bike race, UT Dallas campus

Sept. 14-18: Soccer, UT Dallas soccer fields

Sept. 19: Golf, Sherrill Park Course Two

Sept. 20: 5K run, UT Dallas campus

Sept. 21: Swimming, J.J. Pearce High School natatorium

Sept. 22-23: Texas hold 'em, Civic Center

Sept. 24-26: Flag football, UT Dallas

Sept. 25 and 27: Badminton, UT Dallas activity center

Sept. 29 to Oct. 1: Table tennis, Civic Center

OCTOBER

Oct. 4: Bass fishing, Eastfork Park, Lake Lavon

Oct. 5-6: Dominoes, Holiday Inn Select

Oct. 7-8: Dodgeball, SportsPlex at Valleyview, Far North Dallas

Oct. 9-10: Volleyball, SportsPlex at Valleyview, Far North Dallas

Oct. 12-15: Mini-golf, Adventure Landing, Far North Dallas

Oct. 17: Bowling, Plano Super Bowl

Oct. 19-21: Darts, Civic Center

Oct. 22-24: Basketball, SportsPlex at Valleyview, Far North Dallas

All locations are in Richardson unless otherwise noted.

— Mark Macesich