



Chicago Student MentorRun

Team M3 Student, Xavier Ortiz Featured in October '09 Marathon Edition of Competitor Magazine

For most high school students, running a marathon isn't necessarily on the radar. But Xavier Ortiz is hoping to finish his second 26-mile run this year. The 18-year-old high school senior is training and running with Team M3, a marathon and mentoring program that's part of the Marilyn G. Rabb Foundation. Team M3, which is training students from eight different high schools for this year's marathon, provides mentors to help teenagers train for a marathon or half marathon.

"The program does so much more than teach kids how to run," says program director Cathy Braund. "Training for a marathon is a great way to get to know someone, and on those long runs, you have time to get to know your mentor."

Ortiz discovered the program last year through posters at his school and decided to give it a chance.

"I thought, 'I'd like to try and finish a marathon,'" says Ortiz, who had never run before, but had played team sports like basketball. "Soon after I joined, my godmother, who I was close to, died of breast cancer. Before she passed away, we were talking about a marathon and she told me that she hoped I would stay with it. Now when I run I think of her." Going from zero running to a marathon was tough—and the hot conditions at last year's race made it even tougher. But Ortiz finished in 7:39.

This year, Ortiz is hoping to shave some time off of that with a goal of five hours.

"I had fun last year and they offered it at my school again, so I joined again," he says. "I know I can do better this year."

The toughest part of training for Ortiz has been the early morning wake-up calls—especially when his classmates are sleeping in. He has to be at school by 6:20 on Saturday to catch a bus that takes the Team M3 participants to the Lakefront Path to meet with the rest of the group for the long runs. This year Team M3 is training 190 adults and students for the race.

"It's a good way to train," he says. "It's been a great program."

Do you have any training tips for other runners?

You really have to train for this. You can't slack off. And it's more fun with a group.

When did you start using Nike+?

Nike helps sponsor Team M3. All of the students were invited to Nike headquarters for a shoe fitting and we also received Nike+. It's been a great way to track all of my runs.

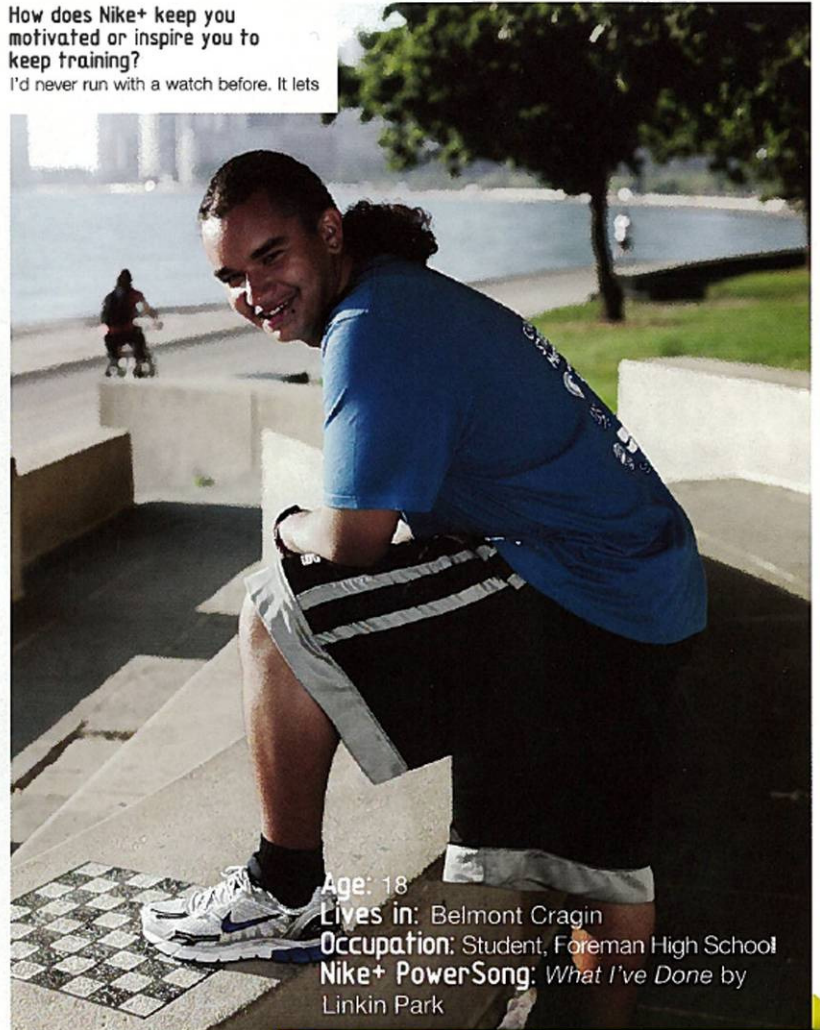
How does Nike+ keep you motivated or inspire you to keep training?

I'd never run with a watch before. It lets

you know exactly how far you've gone, so you have to go the whole distance. If you're a tenth of mile short, you still need to keep going to finish the run. I also like creating an avatar on the site. That makes it a lot of fun.

Do you have a favorite post-run splurge?

Breakfast with my mentor.



Age: 18
Lives in: Belmont Cragin
Occupation: Student, Foreman High School
Nike+ PowerSong: *What I've Done* by Linkin Park

XAVIER ORTIZ

