

Run

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going to run 13 miles, and that's going to be the end of it," Lee said. "This hasn't been like that."

Training for the past several months, though taxing, is important criteria for anyone looking to run a full 26.2-mile course. This rookie is seeking to run her first marathon in Boston, after all, on April 18.

Earning a berth in the famous race is not as simple as signing up. The annual affair is filled with great stories of human drama and emotion from runners who range from some of the world's greatest endurance athletes to those who embody the spirit of overcoming adversity. Lee will be running for her father, former Ithaca College Public Safety Officer Keith Lee, who died by his own hand in 2005 at age 48.

It was with her father in mind that Lee submitted her name in November for one of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's five berths in the race. She was selected and hopes to raise \$11,000 for the organization.

"It's sometimes weird to think I'm running to prepare for the Boston Marathon," Lee said. "There are those moments where you realize 'Oh, this is happening.' But the driving force is the fact you're running for the charity. They've done so much for me over the years, they've been there for our family when we needed something to turn to, and to be able to do this is such an honor — to give back what they've given us."



Michele Lee was in middle school when her father died, and she, her mother and siblings had mountains of community support. A large contingency of the Dryden School District rallied around her and the Ithaca College community — the school that would eventually become her alma mater — cooked meals for the family.

Still, it was almost two years until the Lees found the support group they needed in the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. It wasn't until Lee discovered the organization holds night-long walks each year that she discovered a community dedicated to not only comforting each other in grief, but in changing the conversation on suicide from a stigmatized act of desperation to a con-

sequence of a disease that is, oftentimes, paid little attention.

At 19, Lee attended her first walk, where everyone wears bead necklaces to distinguish who they lost. She wore gold, representing the loss of a parent.

"You know immediately who you're connected with," Lee said. "That was one of the biggest things for me, to see the people coming to walk and all the losses you hear about was really eye-opening. From there, I just always wanted to be a part of it."

Since then, she's had an active role in the organization. After moving to Boston, she began working with the local chapter there, working to raise awareness on not only coping with suicide, but in removing the stigma surrounding de-

pression.

Lee said she doesn't shy away from talking about her father's cause of death. As awareness of depression has grown, the stigma surrounding suicide has given way to open discussion on all platforms, Lee said.

"We never shied away from that and as time has progressed, I've seen people saying writing someone has 'lost their battle with depression' in the obituaries," Lee said.

She said by running in the marathon under the American Association of Suicide Prevention banner she hopes the cause — at least locally — will gain some visibility.

But she has to raise some money first — about \$11,000. And so, on Feb. 20 at the Dryden Hotel, a benefit will be held called Miles For Michele, which will feature live entertainment by Frank Raponi, good food and the knowledge all the money raised will go toward a cause Lee wholly supports.

A minimum \$10 at the door donation is requested, though the recommended donation is \$26.20. Even without a donation, Lee said awareness and acknowledgment of depression, suicide and suicide prevention, above all things, stands as the most significant outcome she hopes to achieve.

"In my head when I was younger, I had no clue how anyone could go through what it is, but now I'm older I know exactly how," Lee said. "My dad was very outgoing, very much a part of (my) siblings' lives, and he was just a totally different person when he was suffering with his depression. To think that could happen to anybody, I think just being aware is very important."

Lansing

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elementary school principal to permanent middle school principal. Brenda Zavaski, a retired principal, was kind enough to return to the field as acting elementary school principal.

It has worked well, but now Chris is asking the Lansing community to help hire a permanent elementary school principal.

"We posted the job today," Chris said on Monday. "We put it up on national job boards, school job sites, and on our website."

While the candidates submit their credentials, Chris is asking the community to help define the selection process. "We are asking the schools and the families to help us write the interview questions."

"Then, we'll need help with the screening process to review resumes, credentials and references. We'll interview six or seven candidates."

Each candidate interviewed will face three panels of questioners: parents, students, and teachers. Each session will consist of as many as 12 questions. Afterwards, the interviewers will gather as a large group to share their per-

spectives and reactions and choose 1-3 candidates to return for an on-site visit.

Being on this panel is a big commitment, Chris acknowledges. But it is an important choice.

“An elementary school principal needs to be collaborative, working with their team and their community. They need to understand the importance of creating a community and celebrating with adults and students together,” Chris said. “And communication is important, since so many parents are sending their kids to school for the first time.”

"It will take time, but we need the right fit for us and for that person. We need stability."

To help the schools with this project, e-mail Chris at cpettograsso@lcsd.k12.ny.us or call the schools at 533-4294.

Recreation Department plans Presidents Day Basketball Camp

The Lansing Recreation Department is planning a Presidents' Holiday Basketball Camp for boys and girls grades 3-8, from noon-4 p.m. February 15-16 in the Lansing High School gym.

Adam Heck and staff will teach fundamentals and give each camper

the opportunity to improve their overall skills. Campers will have fun with skill competitions and game play. Additional specific information is included on registration form which are in the schools, at the Recreation Department and online (www.lansingrec.com). Sign up and have some fun over the holiday days off.

Lansing Lions Club to host Spring Pancake Breakfast

The Lansing Lions Club is hosting its Spring Pancake Breakfast from 7:30-11:30 a.m. March 13 at the Lansing Community center, near the Town Hall. Adult admission will be \$7 and children will be \$5. Five years and younger will be free.

Library news

The Lansing Community Library will be closed on Monday in observance of Presidents' Day. Also, the library is looking for circulation desk volunteers to check out everyone in town. Call Susie at 533-4939 or email at manager@lansinglibrary.org.

Other library programs this week include T'ai Chi Classes from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Tuesday; Preschool Story Time from 1-2 p.m. Tuesday; Mah Jongg from 1-4 p.m. Wednesday; the Lansing Writers' Club on at 7 p.m. Wednesday; and Toddler Story Time on from 10:30-11 a.m. Thursday. Go to www.lansinglibrary.org to see the full calendar and for more information.

Matthew Montague writes Lansing Town Talk for the Ithaca Journal. News and notes should be sent to lansingtowntalk@gmail.com.

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