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## Fundraiser brings together runners, walkers and dogs

by Promise Yee

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DEL MAR — More than 200 runners and walkers, some with dogs on leash, hit the sands of Del Mar beach for the 19th annual Red Nose Run on Dec. 17. The fundraiser supports Fresh Start Surgical Gifts for children, Semper Fi Fund for wounded warriors and Soles 4 Souls gently worn shoes distribution.

Runners and walkers could choose between a 3K and 5K run or walk. While the competition is friendly, first-place bragging rights are awarded in men's, women's, and children's divisions. "Some people are fairly serious about this," Rob Lawson, event emcee, said.

The first woman to cross the finish line was Kate Major, who usually competes at the professional level in triathlons. "It's very rare that you have a run and walk on the beach," Major said.

In addition to the beauty of the course, an event highlight is refreshments at the Poseidon Restaurant afterward.

Weather-wise, onshore wind created a challenge, but did not deter runners.





Also taking on the 3K and 5K challenge were Marines from Balboa Naval Hospital. “We come out annually to support the event,” Marine Sgt. Jesse Southard said. “They’re taking care of our Marines.”

The yearly event began as a fun get-together for runners and walkers in The Low and Slow Running Club, but as the event grew it also became a fundraiser. The run has long supported Fresh Start Surgical Gifts and in recent years added Semper Fi Fund and Soles 4 Souls as event beneficiaries. “The funds raised at the event have had a huge impact on our program,” Amanda Thompson, Fresh Start development coordinator, said.

The run has raised more than \$110,000 for Fresh Start Surgical Gifts over the past 17 years and \$35,000 for Semper Fi Fund in the last four years. “A lot of loyal supporters

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come back year after year,” Thompson said. “We’re pairing in this event (with Semper Fi Fund) to give exposure to each other’s charity. We cover a lot of common ground.”

“It’s a great grassroots event,” Wendy Lethin, Semper Fi Fund senior director, said.

To see video from the Red Nose Run, visit [www.coastnewsgroup.com](http://www.coastnewsgroup.com).

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