

## **ILLINOIS VALLEY STRIDERS BACKGROUND**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The mission of the Illinois Valley Striders (IVS) is to promote wellness through running and walking activities, while striving to enhance our community. IVS serves its members, the running community, and the community at-large through its active involvement in programs, events, and organizations that support this mission.

### **OBJECTIVES**

- Increase interest in physical activity and cardiovascular exercise in the Community.
- Generate a spirit of community involvement and volunteerism.
- Promoting physical activity and wellness through running and walking.
- Supporting local scholastic running events and charitable events such as: Race for the Cure, St. Jude Run and many others.
- Advocating for safe places to run and walk including neighborhoods, parks, tracks and trails.

### **BACKGROUND**

Almost 40 years ago, Dave Snider, who was then the Director of Recreation at the Peoria Park District, invited local running enthusiasts to a meeting to start a Central Illinois running club. Ed McGraw, an aspiring East Peoria Cross Country Coach, and Steve Shostrom, a novice marathoner and energetic labor attorney, were the only two to accept this invitation. This trio founded the Illinois Valley Striders in 1973. During the next year, the Illinois Valley Striders put on two races, a fun run series, and had a membership of nineteen.

The Illinois Valley Striders is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation administered by a volunteer board of directors. With a membership of over 500 members, IVS is a community-based volunteer organization. IVS directs and/or administers more than one hundred events annually, and is recognized as a model community volunteer organization. IVS is involved at all levels of both the recreation and sport of running/walking from grassroots programs to elite athlete events and support – locally, regionally and nationally. IVS has been in the forefront of Peoria's riverfront development and is a core member of the Peoria Area Sports Commission. IVS administers Peoria's Race for the Cure. IVS assists with Central Illinois' high school cross country meets culminating in managing the finish, results and course control for the Illinois Cross Country Championships.

In 1974, IVS created the Steamboat Classic, and it is now regarded as one of the country's premier road races. Today, the Steamboat Classic is now comprised of three running/walking events: Four Mile Run/Walk; 15 Kilometer Run and 4 Kilometer Fun Run/Walk - complemented by training programs for beginners and advanced runners – Building Steam, Access Steam, Rising Steam, Scouting Steam and Team Steam.

## ILLINOIS VALLEY STRIDERS MILESTONES

- 1973 At the invitation of the **Peoria Park District** Recreation Director **Dave Snider**, **Steve Shostrom** and **Ed McGraw** found the Illinois Valley Striders (IVS).
- 1973 IVS becomes a member of the **Road Runners Club of America (RRCA)**.
- 1974 IVS conducts its first race, the **Independence Day Run**, a four mile cross country race in Fondulac Park in East Peoria with **Ed McGraw** serving as Race Director.
- 1974 In conjunction with **Steamboat Days**, IVS conducts the first **Steamboat Classic** in August with **Steve Shostrom** serving as Race Director.
- 1977 IVS conducts the **WomenStrength 4 Mile**, Central Illinois' first all-women's running event, to support WomenStrength (now known as the Center for Prevention of Abuse) with **Joy Kessler** serving as Race Director.
- 1978 The RRCA helps lobby Congress to pass the **Amateur Sports Acts** disbanding the Amateur Athletic Union. This action provides IVS with **501(c)(3)** non-profit status and eliminates restrictions on the conduct of road races.
- 1982 IVS Members **Mike McCoy** and **Gene Pratt** co-founded the first **St. Jude Memphis to Peoria Run**. (This annual event has now raised over \$13 million to benefit the St. Jude's Children's Hospital in Memphis and the St. Jude Midwest Affiliate in Peoria.)
- 1983 **Steve Shostrom** is the recipient of the **Neve Harms Award for Meritorious Service to Sports** from the **Greater Peoria Sports Hall of Fame**.
- 1986 IVS assists with the creation of the **Race for the Cure**, the second race in what would become a global series with over 120 races. (IVS has managed the race operations for the Peoria Race for the Cure for all 27 years. Since its first granting period, the Komen Memorial Affiliate has awarded over \$8,410,728 to local organizations to support breast cancer screening, education and awareness.)
- 1986 The Steamboat Classic begins offering prize money and inviting **World-class runners**. Two World Records are set in the Four Mile Race: **Arturo Barrios** (MEX), 17:34; and **Loraine Moller** (NZL), 20:24.
- 1990 **Road Race Management**, an industry trade organization and newsletter, recognizes **Steve Shostrom** as Race Director of the Year.
- 1990 **Bradley University** hosts the **NCAA Division I Midwest Regional Cross Country Championships**. (IVS provides volunteer event management services again in 1996, 2007 and 2010.)
- 1992 IVS creates the **IVS Children's Running Series** at the Proctor Hospital Fitness Path. (In 2012 on each Monday in May and June, over 300 children, ages 14 and under, participated.)
- 1992 In support of **Youth Crime Prevention**, IVS helps create the **Moonlight Basketball League** for at-risk young adults.
- 1992 **Steamboat Classic** is the first international sports event to officially host **Black South African athletes** after the lifting of a global ban due to Apartheid.
- 1993 **Steve Shostrom** retires as Race Director of the Steamboat Classic and passes the role to **Philip Lockwood**.
- 1993 **East Peoria High School's Tim Broe** and **Jenelle Deatherage** win IHSA State Cross Country Titles. (Coached by **Ed McGraw**, Broe and Deatherage are the first-ever individual champions from the same school.)
- 1994 In cooperation with the **Peoria Area Convention and Visitors Bureau (PACVB)** and in collaboration with other local sports organizations; IVS helps create the **Greater Peoria Sports Authority**, now known as the **Peoria Area Sports Commission** to promote and support regional Sports Tourism.

- 1994 IVS creates **Building Steam**, a training program for the Steamboat Classic designed to introduce running/walking to beginners.
- 1995 Kenyans **Josphat Machuka** (17:24) and **Delilah Asiago** (19:24) set World Records in the Four Mile Race at the Steamboat Classic.
- 1996 **Philip Lockwood** is recruited to help manage Athlete Services and Non-Stadia Events at the **Centennial Olympic Games** in Atlanta.
- 1998 **Steve Shostrom** is inducted into the Greater Peoria Area Sports Hall of Fame.
- 1999 IVS hosts the **Road Runners Club of America National Convention** in conjunction with the **25th Annual Steamboat Classic**.
- 2002 **Tim Broe** wins the Steamboat Classic Four Mile Race in 17:47 becoming the first local champion in the Prize Money Era.
- 2003 IVS conducts the first **IVS Half Marathon and Relay** with the majority of the 13.1 mile course in historic **Springdale Cemetery**.
- 2004 **Tim Broe** represents the United States at the **Olympic Games in Athens**. (In the span of three weeks, IVS raises sufficient funds to cover all expenses for Tim's Mother and Brother to attend as spectators.)
- 2006 **Ed McGraw** is inducted into the Illinois Track and Cross Country Coaches Hall of Fame.
- 2006 In partnership with the **W.D. Boyce Council**, IVS creates **Scouting Steam** for Boy Scouts as part of the Building Steam Training Program for the Steamboat Classic. Scouting Steam unites Boy Scouts and their parents/guardians working to satisfy the requirements for their Personal Fitness Merit Badge.
- 2008 **Constantina Dita** of Romania, an eight-time Steamboat Classic participant, wins the **Women's Olympic Marathon** in Beijing, China.
- 2008 **Road Race Management** recognizes **Philip Lockwood** as **Race Director of the Year**. (The Steamboat Classic joins New York City Marathon and Bolder Boulder 10K as only two-time award winners.)
- 2009 The **Illinois High School Association (IHSA)** celebrates 40th year of hosting its **Cross Country State Championships at Detweiller Park**. (IVS has provided an ever evolving and growing set of services and resources since 1973.)
- 2009 **Illinois Central College** hosts the **NJCAA National Cross Country Championships**, and IVS provides volunteer event management services.
- 2010 In partnership with **Heart of Illinois Recreation Association (HISRA), Advocates for Access, and Easter Seals**, IVS creates **Access Steam** for individuals with disabilities and their family members as part of the Building Steam Training Program for the Steamboat Classic. Access Steam is the first program of its kind in the United States.
- 2010 IVS creates **Rising Steam** for Middle School-aged children as part of the Building Steam Training Program for the Steamboat Classic.
- 2010 IVS adds the **Steamboat Classic 4K Fun Run/Walk** to the Steamboat Classic. This event is designed for youth and individuals with disabilities.
- 2011 **Tim Broe** becomes the Elite Athlete Coordinator for the Steamboat Classic.
- 2012 IVS expands **Building Steam** to **Chillicothe, Pekin and Washington**.
- 2012 IVS and **St. Jude Runs** host **25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary "Louie, Louie Parade and Festival"**, a joint venture that raises money for IVS Youth Running Programs and St. Jude Runs.
- 2012 In partnership with the **Tri-County Regional Planning Commission**, IVS creates the **Bridge to Bridge Run** a new running/walking event to promote physical activity and community unity in Central Illinois.