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TODAY'S Local News

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Pediatrician Brian Luschwitz is participating in the Angeles Crest 100 Mile Endurance Run to raise funds for Vista Community Clinic. Pat Sherman

Pediatrician will run to raise funds for clinic

By Pat Sherman | TODAY'S LOCAL NEWS

VISTA — When pediatrician Brian Luschwitz says his office is the size of a closet, he isn't joking.

"My office used to be the broom closet," said Luschwitz, who works for Vista Community Clinic in leased office space off Thunder Drive.

"The larger office where we had my desk we needed for an exam room. The building wasn't (designed) for a medical office, so they're all twisty, narrow, windy rooms. It's very inconvenient, but we've been making do."

Soon after he was hired six years ago, Luschwitz started hearing rumors that Vista Community Clinic would purchase land for a larger facility.

This year, those rumors became a reality. Construction on a \$6 million, 12,000-square-foot building off Grapevine Avenue began in July.

"The amount of patients that we see has grown so much over the past five to eight years that people are sitting on top of each other in the clinic," Luschwitz said. "The new facility is go-

Run A4 >

Run

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ing to have twice as much space as we're working out of now."

While waiting for the new building to open, Luschwitz is doing his part to help Vista Community Clinic reach its fundraising goal for the project. On Saturday, Luschwitz hopes to raise \$10,000 while competing in the Angeles Crest 100 Mile Endurance Run, or AC 100.

The Escondido father of two began running marathons more than six years ago at the urging of his brother-in-law. Luschwitz now competes each year in the Carlsbad Marathon and the Rock 'n' Roll Marathon.

The Angeles Crest run, which Luschwitz has done three times, is particularly challenging. The course winds its way through the San Gabriel wilderness, all through the night.

A lot of times, it's not clear which way the trail goes," Luschwitz said. "Part of the challenge is making sure you don't get lost."

Last year, it took him a little more than 30 hours to finish. Top finishers complete the course in 18 to 19 hours and receive a silver belt buckle. Luschwitz has twice

Angeles Crest 100 Mile Endurance Run

WHAT Dr. Brian Luschwitz is tackling the race in hopes of raising \$10,000 for Vista Community Clinic.

WHEN Saturday

DONATIONS To donate, go to vistacommunity-clinic.org and click the "donate now" box. Under "How should we use your donation?" scroll down to "Dr. Luschwitz - 100 Miles Marathon."

received Ram Buckles, which are given to those who finish in less than 33 hours.

"One of the hardest parts for me is overnight, just before dawn," Luschwitz said. "I always get the most tired, and, with the darkness, I start falling asleep.

"Once the sun comes up I'm re-energized and start running again, but most of it's walking. You can't run for 100 miles. The tough guys can, but I can't. I usually walk up the hills and, if I have the energy, try and run down."

Whether running or walking at a vigorous pace, each time Luschwitz has done the Angeles Crest he has raised money for Vista Community Clinic.

The first year, he raised about \$4,000 for Project Reach, an afterschool program geared toward reducing teen pregnancy and youth violence. The next two years, Luschwitz raised more than \$8,000 for the Care for Kids program, which helps pay medical bills of uninsured children.

"A lot of the patients we see with Medi-Cal or no insurance have very little financial resources, are working the lowest-paying jobs or have no jobs at the moment," Luschwitz said. "I see patients who are in dire need every day. ... If they didn't have a clinic like ours, they may have to be deciding between medicine and paying for food."

Betsy Heightman, Vista Community Clinic's development director, said the new facility on Grapevine will allow for expanded pediatrics, family medicine, and obstetrics services, as well as access to laboratories, pharmacy and health education programs.

The clinic is getting ready to announce its capital fundraising campaign, she said.

"Every amount helps," Heightman said. "Dr. Luschwitz is just a wonderful asset to the clinic."

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