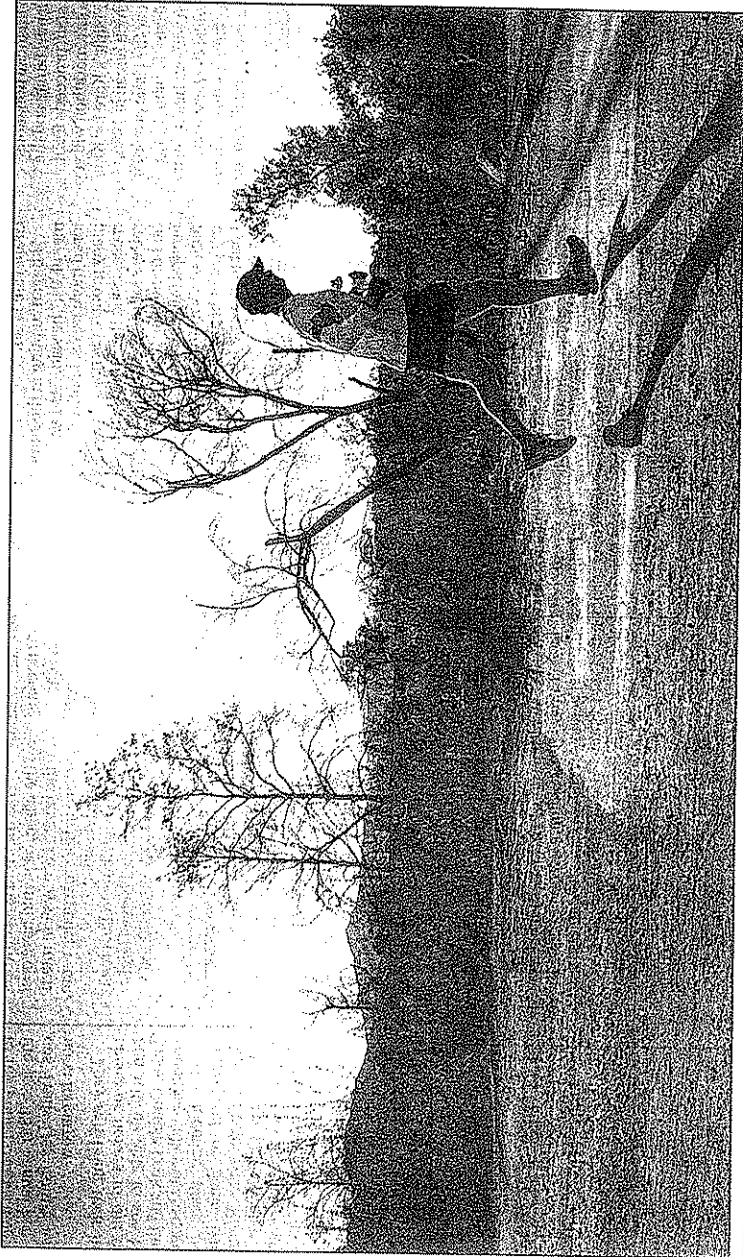


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Our North County



Dr. Brian Luschwitz, who works at the Vista Community Clinic, prepared recently for his 100-mile marathon around Lake Hodges this weekend. Luschwitz expects to be out there between 27 and 33 hours. *Howard Léppin / Union-Tribune photos*

Doctor raising money via 100-mile marathon

By **Celia Taghdiri**

While the nation debates providing health care to the uninsured, a Vista doctor will hit the trail this weekend to help provide medical care for sick children without health insurance.

Brian Luschwitz, a Vista Community Clinic pediatrician, will cover 100 miles on foot around Lake Hodges in Escondido tomorrow and Sunday to raise

money for the clinic's pediatric patients.

Luschwitz has raised \$15,000 the past four years in the Angeles Crest 100-mile marathon in Los Angeles, where recent fires forced the race to be canceled.

Luschwitz decided to run independently to raise funds. The marathon in Escondido will last 27 to 33 hours, he said.

Checkpoints will allow him to stop

for food and drinks and receive a medical checkups. He vowed to run or walk and not sleep or lie down.

"I believe so strongly in the great work that Vista Community Clinic does. This year, more kids than ever have lost their health insurance. I re-

fuse to allow the cancellation of the AC 100 run to cancel this year's fundraising efforts," Luschwitz said.

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Benefit for clinic where uninsured children get care

With financial donations from friends, family and the clinic's staff, proceeds from Luschwitz's marathon will support the clinic's Kare for Kids fund, which began in 1986. Each year the clinic provides medical care for about 11,000 children without health insurance. Often, they are from working families that earn too much money to qualify for pub-

lic assistance but fall short in affording private insurance.

The clinic spends about \$120 to care for one sick child. Luschwitz, who has been at the Vista Community Clinic since April 2002, has served on a committee to raise funds for the clinic's new building on Grapevine Road.

"I began running in the summer of '01," he said. "As I entered more races, I noticed many groups, even whole races, using the runs as fundraisers for different causes. . . . So I decided to start my own fundraising effort and use running as a way to give more to my patients than just the hours I put in at work."

"I was inspired by my young boys at the time, trying to find ways to teach and show them to be generous and to help others. My son, Luke, has even started asking to go on training runs with me."

Dr. Kelly Motadel, medical director at the Vista Community Clinic, said there has been an increase in children needing care at the clinic this year.

A mother came in recently with her 2-year-old son, who had a high fever and cough, Motadel said. The mother couldn't pay for a visit, but she thought the clinic would be more appropriate than an emergency room.

A pediatrician saw him under

Kare for Kids. The child had pneumonia and was given a breathing treatment along with antibiotics. He also had not been vaccinated or given his seasonal flu shot, Motadel said. A medical assistant scheduled the boy for a full exam and his immunizations.

Had the child not come to the clinic, he would have cost the health care system much more in the emergency room, Motadel said.

To contribute to Luschwitz's marathon, call Betsy Heightman at (760) 631-5000, ext. 1139.

Celia Taghdiri is a freelance writer from Vista.