

'Marathon reassured their self-worth'

HARSH JAVERI

Superb," is Vinati's first reaction to her experience at Marathon 2007. Vinati is my beautiful 23-year-old daughter, who works at Om Creations, a sheltered workshop for the handicapped.

Om Creations has taken part in all the Marathons held so far and this time they entered six participants in the wheelchair event of 2.5 km as the dream walk of 7 km done last year was a bit too much for the children.

I was allowed entry as Vini's attendant but then gave the charge to a lady volunteer from Om as I wanted to cover the event through my camera. The marathon always manages to bring out the best in all concerned, the organisers, participants and of course the viewers, who line up the roads and cheer the runners/walkers.

Vinati was of course thrilled to bits when the crowds yelled "Run Mumbai, run". This year approximately 30,000 people took part in different sections and only the full and half marathons are competitive. This event is not just for winning or coming first, second



Vinati Javeri (left) with another participant during the wheelchair event at the Standard Chartered Mumbai Marathon 2007. A photograph by Harsh Javeri

or third; it is about belonging, entering the event to finish it. That's where these enthusiastic children from Vinati's workshop score. Their mental disability

notwithstanding, the excitement and eagerness to finish their run made them shining stars on the tracks. Most of the people taking part raise money from friends and

corporate associates for some cause or the other, so as they say, it's all in good cause.

The crowds cheered the celebrities and the common folks alike. The professional 42 km runners, the dream walkers and the senior citizens were applauded with equal gusto. Loud music and clapping egged the participants on and there was a festive mood all around. It was quite an experience to run along with the wheelchairs while half marathon runners made their way back to the finish and the senior citizens started off on the other side of the road.

It was heartwarming to see the sense of satisfaction fill my daughter's face; the fact that the occasion she looked forward to so eagerly was finally here. I couldn't be happier that the marathon only reassured the sense of self-worth in these talented children. Vinati and her workshop mates only reiterate that famous spirit of Mumbai — that of achieving despite all odds. And as Vinati excitedly said, "I will definitely run again next year".

(As told to LAKSHMI GOVINDRAJAN)

'Last' in the race, but a winner nonetheless

ALEX FERNANDES | MUMBAI

Marathon trophies don't always go to the stronger or faster man. But sooner or later the one who wins, is someone who believes he can.

This slight twist of an oft-heard philosophy could well be the Standard Chartered Mumbai Marathon's perfect tribute to George Varghese, a 39-year-old veterinary doctor who was officially recorded as the "last participant to reach the finish line".

But George is not in the least, embarrassed about it. "My aim was to finish the race. First or last does not matter, I am glad that I did it," he says.

George recalled that it was a bit tough to carry on for the last 10 km of the track. "My knees ached severely but I ran not with my body, but with my spirit," he philosophised.

The Kerala-based runner, who is a father of two young kids, says he hopes his success will motivate others to go on, irrespective of the outcome. "It was this go-getter spirit which saw me running the track," he explains.

"Despite the surging pain in my knees, I went on as I could sense in my mind's eye the picture of my

children and wife cheering me. And yes, they are indeed proud of me," he adds for good measure.

George participated in the marathon for the Kerala-based NGO, Quest For Health, of which he is a member. The NGO promotes the cause of optimum health among people. "About 100 members of Quest For Health participated and nearly 50 reached the finish line," George informs with a hint of pride.

"My family is back home in Kerala and they are thrilled about me finishing the marathon. A little celebration awaits me back home with the family. First or last, they're proud that I completed the marathon," he says, voice brimming over with pride. The kind of pride that's seen in someone who is not just the "also-ran" types, but a winner in his own right!



George Varghese



Melodious harmony: Dr L. Subramaniam and Kavita Krishnamurthy perform at the inauguration of the Siddhivinayak Maghi Mahotsav at Prabhadevi. A photograph by Vishal Olwe

THE ASIAN AGE GUIDE to fortune

1 Which US state was once inadvertently left out of a Rand McNally atlas of the 50 states?

- North Dakota
- Alaska
- Hawaii

2 Chandragupta, who first gained power after capturing the rich Ganges Valley, went on to establish which ancient Indian empire with his son and grandson?

- Deccan
- Maurya
- Gupta

3 Rocket scientist Willy Ley was a writer of science fiction, but also wrote a book about amber. What is its title?

- Dragons in Amber*
- The Princes of Amber*
- The Amber Testimonies*

Tick the answer and check THE ASIAN AGE tomorrow to discover how good you are. The answers to yesterday's questions are:

1. Yalu
2. Akbar
3. Dumfries

CHECKout

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OUR CORRESPONDENT | MUMBAI

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colour trends the range is the perfect beauty solution for the busy woman who wants to look her best.

The range features upgraded formulations characterised by sleek, modern packaging in a wide selection of shades offered to discerning consumers.

Visions products are made of natural ingredients and are suitable for all skin types.