

COACHES

Sharing a Love of Running

Sid and Asteria Howard

Husband and wife coaching duo Sid and Asteria Howard are living proof that those who can do, teach. Both very accomplished runners, the Howards are dedicated to passing on their experience and knowledge by coaching runners in New York Road Runner Foundation's Team for Kids (TFK).

Members of TFK train to run the ING New York Marathon and must either donate or raise \$2,500 to benefit fitness programs for children whose schools don't have physical education. "Our job is to train people who have never run a marathon—some have never run a 5K," Sid explains. "We have 16 weeks to get them ready to run a marathon. Last year, out of 110 team members, only 3 or 4 didn't finish, and that was because they didn't start. Everyone that started the marathon finished."

Sid started running in 1978 and has been running with the Central Park Track Club for 31 years. His storied career includes five world championships, 41 national championships, six U.S. records, and one world record. He acknowledges the role his coaches and mentors played in his development and was anxious to return the favor to aspiring runners. "When the offer for TFK came, I couldn't wait to give back to the sport that we have both gotten so much out of," he says.

Asteria had been active in a variety of sports since her childhood in Bolivia. In addition to running on both the Bolivian and Venezuelan national teams, she worked for many years as a physical education teacher. "My teachers were very technical," Asteria recalls. "I got a lot of technique from them and



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I'm always focusing that on people. I don't want to keep it to myself. I want to help runners of all ages."

Part of what keeps the Howards' coaching fresh is the fact that they teach each other lessons. "When we were married four years ago, Asteria brought a lot of things into my life," Sid explains.

"Since she was a PE teacher, she refined the drills I always had done. We do our sit-ups, stretching, and drills together. She made a believer of me."

The Howards' holistic training—which includes nutrition, drills, stretches, speed work, and distance training—also has made believers of their athletes. Several have returned for a second year and a number of those have brought friends or spouses with them. "The camaraderie is what brings runners back," Sid asserts. "We're a family of runners and we all have the same goal—not just to finish the marathon, but to change our lives. The health part is very important. It's not just about times and splits."

"This year I really want to put more into drills and individual work—everybody really wants to feel like someone is paying attention to them. I did that last year and got a lot of good results," Asteria says. "This year I want to do more so we can get more people to come to the group and give more to the kids."

TFK runners meet with their coaches three times per week. Since many of the runners are starting from scratch or from a limited skill level, the Howards emphasize the importance of recovery and strive to keep their athletes injury free.

The Howards take pride in the achievements of their athletes and aim to continue coaching as a duo. Together, they pass on their love of health and fitness to others. "Running is something we all should do," Asteria says. "Even if it's just for 10 minutes. That will feed your mind, body, and soul. I invite everyone to just try it and see the results."

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