

Montauk Daisy

By Alicja Barahona

This year I coincided my annual run across Long Island with National Breast Cancer Awareness Month to raise funds and awareness. I knew the weather wouldn't be cooperative that I would have a strong wind with breezes up to 40-60miles/hr all the time. I knew, I would have scattered downpours, and I knew the temperature would be below the average. I could have postponed the run for a week or two and I could have selected a better weekend waiting for decent weather. It would have been wiser. However, I thought that breast cancer strikes women at any time. It doesn't decide that this may be a bad time...it is just striking! So, without much fuss I kept my running date solid.

I started on a misty morning at the Montauk Point near the oldest lighthouse in New York State. I had a 'nasty' headwind all the way until I reached the finish line at the other end of Long Island. On the way, I was passing beautiful areas with gardens full of plants with glossy green leaves and brilliant white color flowers. The patches of these plants were harassed by the wind. I was thinking about the white flowers and the meaning of white. White is the color of protection, encouragement, purity as well as it purifies your thoughts, your spirit and strengths your entire energy system. What a perfect color for such miserable weather! White color in some cultures relates to death and mourning; the end of one life and the beginning of another. So, white means a new beginning.

In the search of the charming flowers called *Montauk Daises*, my eyes were happy, my feet picked up the speed and my maintained mental clarity. And the latter you need most while running 120 miles against heavy traffic.

I was drenched by the rain. My feet were making splash, splash, splash noise. My body was leaning forward and my tummy was pushed back by the wind...the jacket was flapping in the wind. As a popular proverb says: "misery loves company" my friend Jay arrived that afternoon to run with me to the end. Now, two of us fought the wind and got wet!

Jay is a great companion and we tried to change the discomfort of the run to a positive experience. Unfortunately, we didn't see anything open from 2 a.m. We were looking forward to a 24 hr diner in Islip, but this year it was closed (management change). We didn't cry but we were a little disappointed. Finally about 6 a.m. we saw a sign 'OPEN'. It was a bagel place in West Islip. Not only got we a hot meal, but also we were allowed to sit in a room that was especially opened for us and at the end our meal was 'on the house'. It was such an unexpected gesture, and the warmth of the staff kept us happy to the end of the run. There are great people on Long Island! During the entire run there were best wishes for a successful run but there were also some nasty comments from drunks at night.

On Sunday morning the sun returned and it was beautiful. The leaves were falling down like colorful, large snowflakes. The wind was not giving up and was hitting our faces. Not far from our finish line, we passed a large wall painted pink with a huge inscription in a black font which said: "WALL of HOPE. There were many messages written on this wall all related to breast cancer, breast cancer patients, survivors and those who were gone too soon. We stopped, and with a permanent marker wrote our messages. We all have a hope for knocking down this disease.

Now, the misery of the weather is fainting, but the reality is that your donations helped to fight this horrible illness. 100% of your donation went to the cause. We should be proud of our togetherness and our accomplishment. Next year, it will be my last run across Long Island, but meantime I wish you and your family happy, healthy days ahead.

Thank you so very much for your support.

Alicja

