InStep4Life 5K Run/Walk, 
Biggest Race Ever in San Antonio
healthy and live a more active lifestyle brought several thousand citizens of San Antonio and guests of the General Session to a 5K fun run/walk on the morning of Sunday, July 5

Participants preregistered and the 2,500 spots were filled long before the deadline at the end of May. A wait list had to be started to accommodate last minute guests who wished to get involved. At 5:00 a.m. runners arrived at Villita Street in San Antonio to receive their running numbers and pick up their packets.

Luckily for those on the wait list, at 5:40, those who had registered but not arrived were considered “no shows” and their spots were given to those on the wait list. The sheer number of individuals on the wait list who arrived at 5 a.m. without the guarantee of participating demonstrates the popularity of both the event and its health message.

The participants all stretched in synchronicity as they sang the song, Jesus Loves Me. Just before the start of the run. “The woman leading out the stretches encouraged each runner to count off the stretch in their own language,” said Brenda Dickerson, editor of Mid-America Union's Outlook Magazine. “You could hear French, Spanish, English, different accents; it was really cool. ”

The course started behind the convention center on Villita Street and continued south on Flores Street. A final mile in the run was along the San Antonio River, which was “scenic and very pretty,” continued Dickerson.

An overarching sentiment among the runners was an appreciation for the San Antonio city personnel. “The officials in San Antonio have been really great to work with,” said Pat Humphrey, the director of the Southwestern Union Health Ministries department. The police force and officers involved were genuinely friendly and helpful, guiding anyone who lost their way.

After the race, the overwhelming emotion in the humid air was togetherness. Every runner who crossed the finish line was flanked by hundreds of strangers cheering them on during the last few steps. Many who had already finished lined the fence in the final stretch and high fived the runners as they passed. The unity between these strangers was palpable in their encouragement of one another.

Some runners bonded on the path and, somewhere between the start and finish line, developed friendships. “I went slower than I originally thought I would,” said Maria Jose, a young girl attending the GC from Honduras. “But I met Coleen as I was walking and since we were going the same speed, we decided to walk together!”

“We figured it was easier to go with a friend than to go alone,” agreed Coleen Daley, a visitor from the New York Conference. “We both felt successful finishing this 5K and our favorite part was definitely making new friends.”
Another participant emphasized how surprising it was to come across people from the past. “People I know but don’t normally see were just running by,” said Terence Sweatt, a native Texan. “I just thought to myself, what a small world for us to both be running in this race to promote health.”

Jennifer Espinoza-Ruiz, the wife of a pastor here in San Antonio, loved the idea of a 5K for the health benefits and motivation of getting in shape. “I’ve been training for this for months,” she enthused. “When I heard about this 5K, I started encouraging our church congregation to get active and participate. I especially worked with our youth, getting them to train and prepare for this morning.”

--Katie Morrison is communication intern at the Rocky Mountain Conference