



# HACIENDA LA PUENTE

UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## Hacienda La Puente Unified High School Student-Athletes Triumph at Annual LA Marathon

**CITY OF INDUSTRY** – La Puente High School's dynamic running group, LP Runs LA, showcased their grit and determination at the 39th Annual Los Angeles Marathon on March 17, which saw 19 student-athletes and four teachers put their year-long training to the test as they tackled the grueling 26.2-mile course among a crowd of approximately 25,000 racers.

La Puente High School educators, club advisors, and avid runners Ana Benitez and Wesley Perez said they started LP Runs LA in 2015 aiming to bring the many health and socio-emotional benefits of running to the students and staff of La Puente. This year marked LP Runs LA's seventh race, with three runners earning an LA Loyal pin for completing the journey around some of the city's most notable landmarks for the second time.

"It was amazing to have so many students eager to participate this year, and it says a lot about the fun and family atmosphere we have created with this incredible club," Benitez said. "We also expanded our coaching staff this year and gained generous support from our school, District, and the running community. We were blessed this year with everything we needed to succeed. Thank you to all our sponsors who helped make this possible for our students. The running community is a great community to be a part of."

LP RUNS LA actively connects with the greater community to ensure the students do not have to pay for their gear or the cost of running the marathon. A Snails Place Running Shop in Brea provided free gear and nutrition this year, while 361 Degrees Running Footwear supplied two pairs of shoes to each runner – issuing the first pair in November and the second in January before the Surf City half marathon.

Additionally, to help pay for the run, La Puente staff, local running clubs, and elementary school educators who taught many of the student-athletes also donated for the event.

"Thank you to all our teachers and staff that helped fund our runners and a huge thank you to A Snails Place and 361 who were our main sponsors," senior and team captain Daniel Mancilla said. "I also want to give a huge shout-out to our coaches for always pushing us to be the best we can be and to our school community for surprising us with a Pie event for Pie Day to wish us good luck the Thursday before the race."

At the start of the 2023-24 school year, the group began practicing twice a week to prepare for the event, starting with a one mile run and increasing their training by one mile each week.

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By March, the group had collectively run more miles than the length of the marathon and participated in various practice races throughout the year, including the Runnin' Scared City of San Dimas 5k in September, the Students Run LA Strength 10k in October, Wobble Gobble 15k in November, the Holiday Half Marathon in December, and many more.

All 19 students completed the race, many crossing the finish line alongside their coaches. Senior Angel Gallegos was the first of the group to finish, concluding the race in just over 4 hours.

On March 19, the runners sported their medals and marathon t-shirts on campus, receiving kudos from their peers, teachers, staff, and principal Dr. Lisa Lopez. The City of Industry and District are set to recognize the running group's accomplishments during upcoming city and Board meetings.

"Completing the LA Marathon says a lot more about the person than the victory itself; it shows tremendous heart, perseverance and grit," said Superintendent Dr. Alfonso Jiménez. "These runners practice fervently throughout the year to achieve this accomplishment – demonstrating tremendous dedication. We are so proud of all our participants and look forward to the continued growth of this group in our community."

### PHOTO CAPTIONS:

**HLPUSD\_LPRUNSLA1:** La Puente High School running group LP RUNS LA celebrates conquering the LA Marathon by sporting their race t-shirts and medals on campus on March 19.

**HLPUSD\_LPRUNSLA2:** Senior Ethan Martinez stops at mile 19 to embrace his mother during the 39th Annual LA Marathon on March 17.

**HLPUSD\_LPRUNSLA3:** From left to right: Senior Daniel Mancilla, coach Ana Benitez and Senior Filly Garcia inspire each other as they race the 39th Annual LA Marathon together on March 17.

**HLPUSD\_LPRUNSLA4:** From left to right: La Puente High School educators, coach and LA Marathon participants Ana Benitez and Wesley Perez celebrate completing the 39th Annual LA Marathon with Senior Salomon Ramirez (left) on March 17.

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