

Running a business

Local man turns hobby into thriving occupation

By Corinne Frayer Staff Writer

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Running is a popular hobby in Ahwatukee Foothills, but for David Allison, running is more like a lifestyle.

In January, Allison was the first Arizona resident to cross the finish line at the P.F. Chang's Rock 'n' Roll Arizona Marathon, with a time of 2:30:35.

"Running is always in the back of my mind somewhere," he said. "I associate myself with running."

With an impressive record – Allison has been a competitive middle distance and distance runner for 30 years – it is no surprise he chose to make a career out of his passion. In May, Allison launched his business, Marathon Coaching Consultants, and has seen much success in the active community of Ahwatukee Foothills.

"When I moved to Ahwatukee in 2005 I met a lot of healthy, fit people," he said. "There are a lot of triathletes and runners out here, and when I was talking to people in the community about running I realized I knew a lot more than I thought I knew."

Allison, who had been a teacher for seven years and, more recently, a manager at various restaurants such as NYPD Pizza, started brainstorming for his business early this year.

"I thought, you know, I know enough people and have enough contacts to get something started," he said. "By the time I got all the initial work done, it was May already. So I started in June, which is a weird time to start a running club in Phoenix, but I'm pretty happy with the way it's going."

Since May, Allison has accumulated almost a dozen personal clients and attracted about 30 runners to his club and marathon program. He also coaches the cross country team at Gateway Community College and is involved with Team in Training.

to get more intense I would do that for them but, ultimately, the program is for mass groups, where I let them find their pace."

Allison's Ahwatukee Foothills group practices Mondays at the Ahwatukee Foothills Family YMCA and Wednesdays at the Altadena Middle School track. Sundays are dedicated to long runs in Tempe.

On Sept. 11, Allison will kick off his training program for the 2008 P.F. Chang's Rock 'n' Roll Arizona Marathon. Partnered with the YMCA, participants will raise a minimum of \$500 for the Stronger Kids Campaign. The money will also pay for the race entry fee, kick-off party, pasta party, private bus to the race start, T-shirt and a marathon or half marathon training program.

Allison does not see his dream stopping here. His hopes, goals and ideas continue to grow through his current success.

"Ultimately I want it to work out where I have anywhere from 50 to 100 people in the club, marathon program or personal coaching, and be able to hire more coaches," he said. "I also know I want to get into organizing races. I just don't think there are enough good races in Arizona."

For more information, visit marathoncoachaz.com.

Although he is a serious and competitive runner himself, Allison takes a laid-back approach to coaching and draws runners of all ages and levels to his practices.

"The marathon program is designed for people to finish, to get from point A to point B," he said. "If someone wants



David Allison has his marathon runners doing short sprints on the field at the Altadena Middle School track.

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David Allison explains to a group of his runners their training exercises for the day at the Altadena Middle School track. Allison is living his dream to train marathon runners.