

THE ¹⁷⁹⁹⁻²⁰¹⁹ STAR _{DEMOCRAT}

TUESDAY, MAY 21, 2019



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The University of Maryland Shore Regional Health's neurosurgery team ran the May 18 St. Michaels Running Festival. The team includes, from left, Tyler Gogoll, surgical team lead; Dr. Khalid Kurtom, medical director, System Operations, University of Maryland Shore Regional Health; Wendy Towers, nurse practitioner; Robert Brault, surgical technologist; Erika Jordan, staff nurse; Thomas Bush, staff nurse, Perioperative Services; Candice Gardini, front desk lead; and Kelsey Wilson, surgical coordinator.

Shore neurosurgery team takes on running festival

By **CHRISTINA ACOSTA**
acosta@chespub.com

ST. MICHAELS — The UM Shore Regional Health neurosurgery team took on the challenge of

training to participate in the St. Michaels Running Festival that took place on Saturday, May 18.

The team, led by Dr. Khalid Kurtom, was on a mission to train daily.

Participating were Robert Brault, surgical technologist; Thomas Bush, staff nurse,

See **RUNNING**
Page A7



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

The University of Maryland Shore Regional Health's neurosurgery team ran the May 18 St. Michaels Running Festival. The team includes, from left, Kelsey Wilson, surgical coordinator; Tyler Gogoll, surgical team lead; Erika Jordan, staff nurse; Dr. Khalid Kurtom, medical director, System Operations, University of Maryland Shore Regional Health; Thomas Bush, staff nurse, Perioperative Services; Wendy Towers, nurse practitioner; Robert Brault, surgical technologist; and Cindy Yost, director, credentialing, UM SRH Medical Affairs.



University of Maryland Shore Regional Health Neurological Surgeon Khalid Kurtom stands with his two children after the St. Michaels Running Festival Saturday, May 18.

RUNNING

From
Page A1

Perioperative Services; Candice Gardini, front desk lead; Tyler Gogoll, surgical team lead; Erika Jordan, staff nurse; Wendy Towers, nurse practitioner; Kelsey Wilson, surgical coordinator; and Cindy Yost, director, credentialing, UM SRH Medical Affairs.

"I am very proud of my team for completing this nutrition and fitness challenge. This was monumental for each of us," Kurtom said. "Personally, running a half marathon was a big challenge, since the most distance I was comfortable running was the occasional 5K run. I trained for an entire year, adjusted my diet and exercised religiously six days a week. I finished fourth overall of almost 1,300 male competitors, first in my age group, with a time of 1:18:49, which is a sub 6 min/mile pace."

Towers said that since January, her mindset regarding fitness changed dramatically. Small diet changes and logging miles with increased speed has made a dramatic difference in her overall health.

"I counsel patients all the time about losing weight, aerobic exercise and core strengthening for improved spine health and reduced back pain. I am living proof it works," Towers said. "I saw changes in all of our team members and am so proud. Most of all, thank you to our greatest cheerleader, Dr. Kurtom."

Wilson shared the same sentiment as Towers and said she is proud of her entire team for completing the race this past weekend. Wilson said she has never been a runner and has been inconsistent with any type of training.

"This race has motivated me to not only become more active each and every day but also to set personal goals. I set out to finish the race and I achieved that. It is incredible to see the transformations and I hope



The team was led by University of Maryland Shore Regional Health Neurological Surgeon Khalid Kurtom.



Tyler Gogoll, UM Shore Regional Health surgical team lead, runs to the finish line at the St. Michaels Running Festival that took place on Saturday, May 18.

we encourage our patients and our peers to strive for a healthier lifestyle," Wilson said.

The neurosurgery team includes more than 30 years' difference between the youngest and eldest members; and varying levels of athletic experience and fitness.

"When a half marathon was originally suggested to me, I have to be honest and say that I was not thrilled," Gogoll said. "I have always been into fitness, however long distance runs were not my cup of tea. Once everyone else agreed, I was also on board."

"We started our training and I saw improvements in myself right away," he said. "With the constant reassurance and encouragement of my team members that we could do this, we all saw improvements in our selves each week."

"The fact that we had an awesome group of people to lean on really helped get me through the training and closer to the goal," Gogoll said. "I'm super proud of my team and myself for sticking with the training

and completing the race and showing our patients the importance of being healthy and setting personal goals to strive toward."

Group Exercise at Hearstone Director Jannie Regino, a certified strength trainer, worked with the neurosurgery team for the St. Michaels Running Festival.

"It was my pleasure to be a part of the Half Marathon Training Program for the Neurosurgery Team," Regino said. "Dr. Kurtom mentioned to me in the start of the New Year he wanted his Neurosurgery Team to participate in a fitness challenge, "train for the St. Michaels Half Marathon," set for spring. Running several half marathons, including the St. Michael's Half a few years ago, I was happy to help prepare the team for the challenge."

Team members were provided a 12-week "beginner" Half Marathon Training Program. The team also trained independently after work, running the long distance runs on weekends and increasing the mileage according to the program,

which was necessary to finish the half marathon without injuries.

"I know the discipline required to sustain training and to make it to the ultimate and tremendous step across the finish line," Regino said. "I'm very proud of the Neurosurgery Team for completing this fitness challenge, running a Half Marathon will undoubtedly redefine a person and perhaps some of the members will continue to run or participate in yet another 13.1 miles."

Kurtom said he could not be happier and proud of his staff to participate in this journey with him.

"We hope to set an example that inspires fellow employees throughout the system," Kurtom said. "and just as important, our patients and their family members, to take their health and fitness seriously."

For more information about the St Michaels Running Festival, visit the website, <http://runstm.com/> or the Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/StMichaelsRunningFestival>.