Hi all,

 As some of you already know, I am helping organize an effort to help raise money for the National Kidney Foundation during the Illinois marathon weekend (April 27 – 28).  Some friends from my running group have formed a “team” that we are calling “Kidding Around For Kidneys”, and we have two primary goals:

 A) Raise as much money for the National Kidney Foundation as possible.  To help facilitate this, we have developed a website to help us raise money for this great cause: <https://www.crowdrise.com/o/en/campaign/kidding-around-for-kidneys>

 Anyone can donate online, and your generosity will certainly be appreciated.

 B) As our team’s name implies, our second goal is to have as much fun doing as possible while doing this! The idea for this developed during last year’s Illinois half-marathon, when a few from our running group decided to dress up in some ridiculous outfits and run the course slowly, while high-fiving as many spectators and other runners as possible.  It made for quite an interesting scene, and was very motivating to all involved.   So this year we are looking to not just repeat this performance, but step up our efforts by recruiting many more of our friends to participate.   If you are interested, recognize that there are NO RULES to this.  Indeed, some in our group plan to dress up in crazy costumes (with a Retro-70’s theme), others may not, but all of us are planning on running slow, high-fiving as many spectators as possible…. maybe even drinking a beer or two along the way… whatever you want.  Anything we can do to get the spectators and other runners enthusiastic about the event.  Anyone who would like to join us are free to participate in any of the races over the weekend, including the 5K on Friday night, or the 10K, half marathon, full marathon, or marathon relay on Saturday.  I have personally signed up for both the 5K on Friday and half marathon on Saturday, and will have more on that below.

 So… how can you participate?  There are multiple ways:

 1) Whether or not you are willing or able to participate in one of the races, you can donate money to our cause by going to the crowdraising website that is listed above.  Those who raise $100 or more will receive this awesome Team Kidney running shirt:



 If for whatever reason you prefer to donate money, but not using the website, I am also collecting checks.  Please make them out to the National Kidney Foundation.  You can send them to my home address (1503 Sussex Court, Champaign, IL 61821), or give them to me personally.

 2) Whether or not you decide to donate any money, we still encourage you to join our “clown posse” during any of the races!  A portion of the race proceeds goes to different charities, so just signing up for the race and participating is great way to support our community.   As I said, some of those running for fun are going to dress in a retro- 70’s outfit, including mullets, bad mustaches, short shorts, and possibly some ridiculous looking running/wrestling singlets.  Myself and some others may try to come up with a kidney-related outfits to wear (TBD), but what you wear, and how enthusiastic you are during the race is all up to you.  The idea is just to get creative and have a lot of fun.

 3)  Another way to donate money for the cause is that we will be selling white painters hats both before the race and at the race Expo (at the ARC, the week of the race) in honor of the events Master of Ceremonies, Dick Beardsley. The hats will be adorned with a “Beardley’s Bandits” logo written on the bill of the hat.  The background story on this:   for those of you who may not know, Dick Beardsley was a world-class marathoner in the 80’s, and would often run in a white painter’s hat.  His painter’s hat gained some prominence when he wore it during an epic battle at the Boston Marathon he had with Alberto Salazar.   During last year’s race, Dick saw our group running and clowning around on the course and ended up crossing the finish line with them, and has since befriended several in the group.  This year, Dick will not be able to run the race due to a knee replacement surgery. But several of us, myself included, will be pushing him around the ½ marathon course in his wheelchair.   And yes, we will be dressed up and yucking it up with the crowd in the process.  It should be a fun event.

 So… if you think you may want to get involved with our group, you have multiple options to do so.  If you have any questions or ideas on how to raise money and/or make it a festive race, please let me know.

Cheers,

Ken