

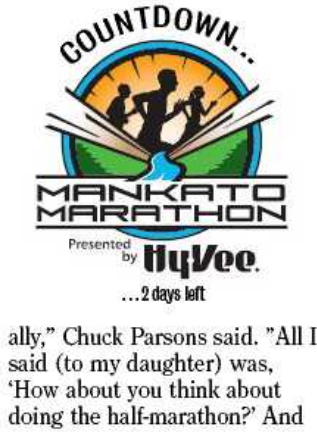
Mankato Marathon makes sense for 'running family'

By Drew Lyon
Special to The Free Press

MANKATO — When Chuck Parsons of Mankato first approached his daughter about participating in the Mankato (half) Marathon, he was pleased when she offered little resistance. No begging or pleading required.

In fact, Jordann Parsons, 21, had already considered the notion. Saturday, Jordann, along with her father and cousin, Jaclyn Erickson, will be running in the inaugural half-marathon.

"We all just decided individu-



ally," Chuck Parsons said. "All I said (to my daughter) was, 'How about you think about doing the half-marathon?' And

Please see FAMILY, Page D2



Mankato's Chuck Parsons, daughter Jordann Parsons (middle) and niece Jaclyn Erickson will be competing in the inaugural Mankato Half-Marathon Saturday. It will mark the first time all three have run in the same race.

John Cross

FAMILY: Plan to meet at finish line

Continued from Page D1

she said she and her cousin had already talked about doing it. I didn't have to push or anything."

The prospect of running in a race in her hometown was too alluring to pass up, Jordann said.

"I'm excited there's one happening here," said Jordann, who was forced to stop running competitively after suffering a knee injury in junior high school. "I've had an interest in running a marathon for some time and this just seemed like the perfect time, since it's right around home, to give it a shot."

Jordann's younger sister, Kjersten, a sophomore runner on Mankato East's cross country team, says running is almost a rite of passage in the Parsons' household.

"We're definitely a running family," said Kjersten, who plans on volunteering with her cross country team-

mates at one of the event's water stands. "It's nice because they're always cheering for me, and now I get to cheer for them."

Jordann agrees: "Pretty much everyone in my family runs. It makes running more fun that way."

Chuck also concurs: "We all like to run. Each one of us is just different in how much we like to run."

Chuck, 59, leads by example. He's been running in long-distance races for five years and in preparation for the race has run several days a week at a 25 to 30 miles-a-week clip since last summer.

"It being the inaugural marathon, I'm looking forward to it," he said. "I think it's great to have a race like this."

"There are a lot of runners in Mankato, nice trails. It's an avid running community, and to have an opportunity like this to do a long run, it's exciting."

Between work and school at MSU, Jordann, a 2007 Mankato East graduate, hasn't been able to train as much as she'd like, but says she still runs several times a week, up to 10 miles on certain days.

"I'm pretty sure I'll be ready to run the full 15 miles," she said. "I have a couple other friends who are running, so it'll be fun."

"I have a little bit of nerves, who knows what will happen. I just want to finish without having to stop and walk."

The trio plans to run at their own individual pace and meet at the finish line.

"My dad is faster at long races," Jordann said. "I think we're just going to run at the pace we're comfortable at."

Her father hopes the months of training will pay dividends Saturday.

"I'm not really nervous," he said before adding with a chuckle, "I hope I'm in (top shape)."