

# Jewish Journal

Palm Beach Central

THE LARGEST JEWISH NEWSPAPER IN THE NATION

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## 15-year-old runs to raise awareness for Chiari Malformation



Noah Forman, 15, is organizing a 5k run with the Bobby Jones Chiari and Syringomyelia Foundation. The event will be held Sept. 18 in Boca Raton.  
PHOTO COURTESY OF NOAH FORMAN

By Linda Chase

Florida Jewish Journal

Noah Forman, 15, is raising awareness of Chiari Malformation and Syringomyelia by helping to organize the Chiari Awareness 5k Run - 1mi Fun Run - 1mi Walk. The fundraiser will benefit the Bobby Jones Chiari & Syringomyelia Foundation. The event will take place at South County Regional Park in Boca Raton on Sept. 18, 2022 beginning at 7:30 a.m. Noah recently chatted with the Florida Jewish Journal.

**Linda: Who is the greatest inspiration in your life and why?**

**Noah:** My greatest inspiration is my mother. She has stood by me through the ups and downs of life. She has a great moral compass and a positive attitude. She gives herself entirely to her children. She respects all people. In short, she is my best friend.

**Linda: Do you have other hobbies/interests besides running?**

**Noah:** Other than running, I enjoy training as a third-degree Kukkiwon certified black belt in Taekwondo. I also love flag football, basketball, refereeing travel soccer, photography, digital media, waterskiing/slalom, and working as a summer camp counselor. I enjoy watching college sports, especially Michigan State football and basketball.

**Linda: What did you do as a bar mitzvah project?**

**Noah:** Due to COVID-19, my bar mitzvah has been postponed. My two siblings and I had plans to be B'nai mitzvah together in the summer of 2020. We did carry out our mitzvah project however by hand-making blankets for

Turn to Chiari, Page 22

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## LOCAL

### Chiari

from Page 1

the Humane Society.

**Linda: Does Judaism play a major role in your life?**

**Noah:** The teachings of Judaism have played a major role in my life and who I have become. I attended a Jewish preschool, Jewish day school, and a Jewish summer camp. Through these experiences, Judaism has taught me some fundamental values of life including respect (Kavod), responsibility (achrayut), caring (chesed), community (kehilah), and kindness (sever panim yafot).

**Linda: What are the benefits of running for you personally? Does it release stress, etc?**

**Noah:** I enjoy running because it is a great stress reliever. I love being outside and seeing many different terrains. I like to push myself to distances I never thought I could accomplish, like running a half marathon at age 14. I enjoy the math components of running including figuring out my mile splits based on timing and fatigue influences.

**Linda: How many times a week do you run?**

**Noah:** In season, I run 8 times a week! More than once a day. Out of season, I try to run 4-6 times per week depending on other cross-training workouts that I perform. I like to add weightlifting, speed, and agility training to my off-season.

**Linda: How did being diagnosed with Chiari Malformation and Syringomyelia change your life?**

**Noah:** Being diagnosed with Chiari malformation and Syringomyelia dramatically changed my life. At the time of diagnosis, I was twelve years old and actively involved in contact sports. I was a three-time world champion MMA sparring champion and involved with wrestling and jiu-jitsu as well. I had to remove myself from contact sports and be more conservative with my actions. At that point, I discovered running.

**Linda: Why did you decide to create your upcoming 5k fundraiser? Do you plan to create other events and projects that raise awareness of Chiari Malformation and Syringomyelia?**

**Noah:** After I was removed from contact sports and found my love for running, I began running multiple 5k races. I have traveled to a few states, even running 5k races, as well as half marathons. I love the 5k distance, however. After one 5k race, I decided that I wanted to organize my own 5k fundraiser event. I partnered with the Bobby Jones Chiari Foundation which hosts 1 mile walks throughout the country through their unite@night events. The director of unite@night, Cathy Poznik, agreed to allow me to chairperson and direct a 5k run as well as host a 1 mile walk in Boca Raton.

We will be the only 5k run in the country benefitting Chiari and Syringomyelia. I will also be speaking at the upcoming unite@thehill next June to lobby Congress on behalf of Chiari patients countrywide. I hope to

participate in many Chiari related events throughout the country as a chairperson and speaker in the future.

**Linda: Why is it important for you to give back to the community?**

**Noah:** I attended a Jewish preschool from the age of 2 through 5. We had tzedakah every week. I would bring in my loose change at a very young age and felt so powerful when I placed it in the box. I believe, as Jewish people, we are compelled to be givers and participate in charitable causes and give to those less fortunate. I believe that by showing kindness, as the Torah teaches, maybe we can all work together and heal the world.

**Linda: Is your family involved in your 5k fundraiser?**

**Noah:** My family has been very helpful and supportive with the 5k fundraiser. I like to bounce ideas off my parents, and obviously, they are helpful with driving me to and from events since I am only 15.

**Linda: Do you and your family work together on other community projects?**

My grandmother has instilled in all of us the importance of giving back to the community. She is always involved in multiple volunteer projects and has taken me along with her since I was young. My mother has carried on with that tradition and I have been with her in nursing homes and dementia facilities, volunteering since I was seven years old. I have learned from a young age the importance of giving back to the community.

**Linda: What are your dreams and aspirations?**

**Noah:** My long-term dream is to run for President of the United States. In the near future, I hope to graduate high school with honors, then attend a great college and I plan to receive my JD in law and master of Business.

**Linda: What are you most grateful for in your life?**

**Noah:** I am most grateful for an amazing support team in my family. From my grandparents to my extended family members, to my parents, and siblings, I am surrounded by love. My personal community will help me achieve my goals as they always have my best interest at heart. For that, I am eternally grateful.

**Linda: It was a pleasure speaking with you, Noah. I'm wishing you all the best with your fundraiser and future endeavors.**

**Bobby Jones CSF Mission:**

To advance knowledge through research and to educate the medical, allied sciences and lay community about Chiari malformation, Syringomyelia and related disorders.

The Chiari Awareness 5k Run - 1mi Fun Run - 1mi Walk benefiting the Bobby Jones Chiari & Syringomyelia Foundation, takes place at South County Regional Park (MaryLou Berger Pavilion Sunset Cove Amphitheater, 20405 Amphitheater Circle) in Boca Raton on Sept. 18, 2022 beginning at 7:30 a.m.

**For more information:**

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