



RUNNING

to Him

BY MARCY ZABRISKIE

Years ago my son Derek competed in a much-anticipated track meet. For three years of his young life, he had prepared for and hoped to win the two-mile race. Now as we watched with the crowd gathered near the finish line, it seemed the race would last forever. When Derek crossed the line first, the crowd burst into cheers. He was surrounded by coaches, teammates, and friends offering congratulations. Derek seemed relieved and thrilled to have finally accomplished his goal.

I noticed, however, that in the tangle of the crowd, he was frantically scanning the field as though he wanted to be somewhere else. I watched, with tears in my eyes, as Derek bolted across the field, arms outstretched, into the open arms of his father—the place he wanted to be. I recorded that moment in my mind—a moment when I saw just how much our son loves and needs his dad.

Derek's preparation for this event had not been easy. There were times of discouragement, disappointment, and sometimes despair. But Derek had the constant support of his greatest fan—his father! In rain, wind, sleet, or snow my husband was at every race offering Derek encouragement.

At those races my husband stood apart from the other spectators at what I considered an odd place. He wasn't at the finish line or even along the final

stretch, but at a distant corner on the far side of the field. Once I asked him why he stood there. I will never forget his answer. He said, "I stand at the place my son needs me the most. He needs to know I'm there at the most challenging moment—when his legs burn and he feels like he cannot go on. He needs to hear at that far corner a voice telling him to keep moving because he has worked hard and deserves to do his very best. There will be cheers at the beginning and loving support at the end, but I will be at the corner where I know he feels like giving up."

As I watched Derek leave his team at the finish line and run a great distance into his father's arms, I realized that spiritual whispers of encouragement from my Father in Heaven have not come at moments in my life when I felt most sure of myself. Instead, those reminders of His love have come when I thought I could go no farther, when I felt as if my spiritual legs would collapse in exhaustion. I have felt His love and I have known then, as I know now, that I am His child. As I remember my husband's arms encircling our son, I imagine what it will be like to cross the finish line of this life and run into the waiting arms of our Father in Heaven. I am grateful for His support and that of our Savior, Jesus Christ, which has helped ease every difficult turn in my life. ■