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PHOTO COURTESY OF NANCY VASQUEZ

**SALSA members run marathon**

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NEWS EDITOR

On Sunday, Oct. 9, four Illinois Wesleyan University students endured one of the ultimate tests of human strength: the marathon.

For sophomores Janette Abassi, Melissa Ramirez, Vanessa Rodriguez and Jairo Rosales, the knowledge that their sweat and tears would benefit a good cause helped them persevere.

The group, all members of the Student Spanish and Latino Student Association (SALSA), ran the Bank of America Chicago Marathon to raise money for Casa de Los Angeles, a daycare and community center in

San Miguel de Allende, Mexico. Together, they were able to raise close to \$3,000 for the organization.

According to Abassi, all funds raised by the runners will go directly to the operation of Casa de Los Angeles, which provides daycare, meals, medical services and transitional housing for mothers and children.

Because the group operates in Mexico, their work holds special meaning for the SALSA members. "SALSA students are passionate about social justice issues, and supporting under-resourced communities is a high priority," said Nancy Vasquez, Assistant Director of Admis-

sions and SALSA faculty advisor. "They felt even more passionate about this specific opportunity since we have several members that are of Mexican descent."

"The organization creates safe havens for mothers and children and helps improve the lives of poor families in Mexico," Rodriguez added. "I admire this because I am Mexican-American and have been to Mexico and have seen how harsh conditions can be."

And while the race was painful and grueling—"at mile 17, I literally wanted to cry," Abassi said—the group agrees the marathon was an unforgettable life experience.

"It challenged me mentally and physically. To see the various types of people running was such an inspiration," Rodriguez said. "Toward the 20th mile, I was passed by a 75-year old woman—she was amazing!"

For Abassi, the energy of the Chicago crowd was the most uplifting part of the race. "People were so eager to hand you water or food. Seeing them cheering and motivating all the runners was so fun. They were shaking their cow bells, drumming and screaming," she said.

Abassi especially enjoyed the diverse cultural music as she ran through neighborhoods like Little Italy. Images like the street covered with Gatorade cups will remain in her memories forever.

Posters bearing such messages as "One day you won't be able to run a marathon. Today is not that day!" and "Don't poop your pants" also stick out in Abassi's mind. "The motivating, funny displays helped me keep going," she said.

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PHOTO COURTESY OF VANESSA RODRIGUEZ

Far above: SALSA members support the runners at the finish line. Above: Rodriguez poses with roommate, sophomore Joanna Balcerzak.

**New internship breaks IWU bubble**

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STAFF REPORTER

Fifteen years ago, Associate Professor of Political Science James Simeone and Professor of Political Science Tari Renner dreamed of creating an internship that would give students job experience working for the city of Bloomington—an arrangement they hoped would be mutually beneficial for both parties.

But the right opportunity did not present itself at the time, and the project remained only a vision.

Today, the professors are watching their dream become a reality as Illinois Wesleyan University, Illinois State University and the City of Bloomington join together in creating a new internship for six students.

According to Renner, the internship will provide a hands-on experience for students focusing on a specific project, such as developing a social network policy for the city, re-

searching the best practices of other cities and making recommendations for Bloomington to adopt.

Renner believes the internship is a prime example of active learning consistent with the purpose of a liberal arts education.

"This new internship is an exciting opportunity for students to get serious responsibilities in the policy-making processes of our community," Renner said.

"It's a win-win program as far as I'm concerned. The city gets more solid information to make critical decisions without expensive outside consultants, and the students get experience from hands-on learning and become more marketable."

The process of creating the internship began when junior political science major Ted Delicath and senior political science major Steve Lessaris suggested setting up a city internship to break the "Wesleyan Bubble."

For 10 years, eliminating this bubble has been a goal of fac-

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**CCS releases report**

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Counseling and Consultation Services (CCS) recently published a report detailing the concerns of their clientele over the past year, as well as highlighting their programming efforts on campus and comparing these statistics to national patterns among college students.

According to Bob Rogers, counselor and alcohol education coordinator at CSS, this report includes some significant changes in data from previous years.

The developments can be attributed to new programs on campus designed to increase safety and educate students about alcohol and substance abuse as well as a general improved awareness on campus of CCS and what it has to offer students.

"Last year, we began to collaborate our efforts between the four universities in town, the community and the Bloomington-Normal police force to increase safety on campus. I think the overall decrease in alcohol consumption and substance abuse this past year can be attributed to this combination of programs and tools that

we were not utilizing before," Rogers said.

The statistics back Rogers' claim, as the IWU student's average number of drinks per week has decreased significantly since last year, and has in fact decreased by almost two full drinks since 2002. IWU students also consume on average 4.2 drinks per week, compared to the national average of 5.2.

Perhaps more surprising is that 39.7 percent of IWU students reported they do not consume alcohol. The next highest group was 1 to 5 drinks per week at 34.9 percent, with only 2.3 percent consuming 21 or more drinks per week.

"What is unique about IWU students is not so much that their statistics for alcohol consumption are lower than on many other college campuses, but that these numbers have remained consistent over the past few years," Rogers said.

Rogers also stressed that students are held to an IWU code, not just while they are on campus but also in the Bloomington-Normal community. "Older students warn first-years of the consequences of drinking at IWU, especially since the new

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