



Jennifer Shaw Suhr  
with son Wyatt



## Fighting Asthma, One Step at a Time

By Megan Crawford  
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Maryville, Mo. - A Northwest Missouri State University sorority will be spreading the word about the seriousness of asthma while at the same time raising money for Children's Mercy Hospital in the name of a Phi Mu alumna.

Jennifer Shaw Suhr was an avid runner and dealt with having asthma her entire life. Suhr went to Northwest from 1987-1992, and was a member of the Phi Mu sorority. In December 2000, Suhr died as a result of her asthma.

Nearly eight years later, her family is working with current Phi Mu members at Northwest to put on the Jennifer Shaw Suhr 5K Memorial race.

Jennifer's sister-in-law, Julie Shaw, said they had been thinking about having a race for years, but didn't really push it until this year.

All proceeds will go to Children's Mercy Hospital in Kansas City, Mo. The event will honor Jennifer's memory in an effort to help others who suffer from asthma.

At the time of her death, Jennifer left behind a husband and a 2-year-old son, Wyatt.

"We really want Wyatt to have these memories and know that we are all keeping his mother's memory alive," Julie said. "We need to do this in memory of Jen and in effort to help others who suffer from asthma. Hopefully, we can help make people aware of how serious asthma is, and save lives."

Jennifer's mother, Sandi Shaw, said she knows her daughter would be very pleased to have a 5K race in her memory.

"She was athletic and very competitive," she said. "She never let her asthma hold her back." From the time she was a little girl, Jennifer didn't let asthma keep her from doing the things she loved. She stayed fit with activities such as softball, running and water skiing.

"As her mother, I watched her struggle with her breathing on many hot, humid game days — but she never gave up," Sandi said. "She was determined to play the best she could."

As Jennifer grew older, becoming a mother and a wife were a top priority for her, but she still kept active.

"When her son was born she had a constant bike-riding companion," Sandi said. "She bought a baby carrier for her bike and off they went. She was a great mom."

Originally from Kansas City, Mo., Jennifer lived in Council Bluffs, Iowa, as an adult. When the family decided where to sponsor a race, they knew Maryville would be the best choice. Both Jennifer and her husband Troy graduated from Northwest.

"Jen and her Phi Mu sorority sisters had a very special bond that you don't find very often," Julie said. "They were very religious about going back to Maryville at least once a year to reminisce and relive their college days."

Jennifer's sorority sisters had a tree planted outside of Roberta Hall in her memory in 2006. Helping out on Saturday, Sept. 27 for the 5K Memorial will be current Phi Mu sorority sisters as well as several members who had gone to school with Jennifer. A group of Phi Mu alumnae will be traveling to Maryville to help with the event.

"We are hoping to have this turn into an annual memory walk/run for asthma," Julie said. "We hope that our efforts will impact as many children as possible."

"We would appreciate everyone's support in our first Jennifer Shaw Suhr 5K Memorial walk/run. We would love for you to come out and join us for the walk/run or donate money to the Children's Mercy Hospital Asthma Department."

Julie is coordinating with St. Francis Hospital in Maryville to have things like asthma screenings available on race day. Specifics have not yet been determined.

Race day check-in will be from 7-8 a.m., Saturday, Sept. 27 at the high rise tennis courts on the Northwest Missouri State University campus. Start time is 8 a.m. Early bird entry fee is \$30, with registration after Friday, Sept. 12, being \$40. Child entry fees are \$15.

Registration forms are located at the Maryville Community Center, 1407 N. Country Club Rd. and available by calling Mallary Herring at (816) 752-1093.

To register online, go to [www.runforjennifer.eventbrite.com](http://www.runforjennifer.eventbrite.com).

Asthma is a chronic disease of the airways that may cause wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness and nighttime or early morning coughing.

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