



"On the Move" Gets Harvard Going

By JULIE R. BARZILAY, CRIMSON STAFF WRITER
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Ted "Barefoot Ted" McDonald was 87 miles into a 100-mile race in the Copper Canyons of Mexico when he stopped to chat with author Christopher McDougal.

A shocked McDougal urged McDonald to finish the final 13 miles of the race—but McDonald insisted on taking a three-hour break to laugh and talk with McDougal before completing the ultramarathon.

McDougal, author of the book "Born to Run: A Hidden Tribe, Super Athletes, and the Greatest Race the World Has Never Seen," commended this aspect of McDonald's running philosophy at yesterday's launch event of Harvard on the Move—a new University initiative aimed at building a community of runners and walkers.

"He's not practicing pain, like most of us do," McDougal said of McDonald's attitude towards exercise. "He's practicing pleasure."

The launch event in Sanders Theatre included a panel with McDougal, University President Drew G. Faust, Human Evolutionary Biology Professor Daniel E. Lieberman '86, and Associate Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School John J. Ratey. The speakers discussed running from several unique standpoints—but all agreed on one fundamental message: going for a run should be fun.

"Running is part of who we are as organisms," Lieberman said. "We evolved to do it—it's as much a part of being human as walking, talking, thinking, or chewing."

Ratey, author of "Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain," discussed how exercise improves mood, reduces anxiety, guards against the effects of aging, and enhances memory—all of which he said were relevant to Harvard students faced with intense workloads and long hours in the library.

Lieberman said the mental and physical health benefits of running are why he and Craig Rodgers, Director of Harvard's Athletic, Academic, and Personal Excellence program, initiated and developed Harvard on the Move.

The program, which is coordinated by the Harvard Center for Wellness, will hold weekly walks and runs open to all students, faculty, and individuals in the greater community, according to program manager and coach Alexios N. Monopolis. The first walk—which Faust will attend—is



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John J. Ratey, MD speaks about the benefits of exercise to peak brain performance during a panel discussion featuring Daniel Lieberman, Christopher McDougal, and Drew Faust.

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scheduled for Feb. 1 at noon, beginning at the John Harvard Statue.

The program will also include professionally coached training sessions and lectures about research in the physiological, psychological, and nutritional sciences, Monopolis wrote in an e-mail to The Crimson.

After the panel, attendees were encouraged to try out barefoot running and different running gaits on a treadmill in the transept of Memorial Hall.

Lieberman's research has indicated that, with proper running technique involving a forefoot strike, barefoot running can result in reduced impact on joints.

"I always had this notion that big bulky shoes would correct my form," said event attendee David C. Liu '14. "But then I started getting wind of this barefoot thing, and it really made a lot of sense to me."

The panelists cautioned that safe barefoot running requires gradual training as well as proper running form—and that shoes are vital in cold winter months.

Beyond its fitness aims, the program is also "designed to build community," Faust said.

"I honestly think one of the key things about exercise is that it's not meant to be a solitary behavior," Lieberman said. "If you're running too fast to have a conversation, you're probably running too fast."

—Staff writer Julie R. Barzilay can be reached at jbarzilay13@college.harvard.edu.

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