



## Go Green Case Study: 2010 Calabasas Classic



# The 2010 Calabasas Classic Goes Green

Southern California 5k and 10k takes Pledge of Sustainability with Active Network

### History of the Calabasas Classic and the Talbert Family Foundation

The Calabasas Classic 5k & 10k has been a local favorite for seven successful years. The race is an entertaining, community event that also functions as fundraiser for the Talbert Family Foundation (TFF), providing financial support for families dealing with catastrophic illnesses.

The origin of the Calabasas Classic and the TFF was quite serendipitous. Event director Julie Talbert and her husband Lloyd moved to the Calabasas area in 2001 and thought it would be ideal for a community running event. Both Lloyd and Julie had a love for endurance events and Julie was experienced in event management. Around the same time, the husband-and-wife team decided to start a charity to provide financial support to families battling cancer. Julie and Lloyd had been personally affected and felt a need to help others struggling with similar issues. The inspiration to start a non-profit foundation and a running event fed off each other, converging into a plan to use the race as a fundraiser for the charity. Julie called up the City of Calabasas to pitch her ideas and was amazed to learn that just the night before, the City had approved a 5k/10k course and event date—they simply needed someone to fundraise and manage the event. Julie and Lloyd happily signed on and launched the inaugural race on November 13, 2004 to over 1,100 participants.



“Cut down on paper brochures and flyers—they are minimally effective. We saved over \$5,000 by eliminating them.”

– Julie Talbert,  
Event Director,  
Calabasas Classic

### Challenge: Small Budget, Big Responsibilities

Julie’s challenge as an event director was similar to that of any other grassroots organization—she had a small budget and no support staff. Julie intuitively knew she would need two things to insure the success of the Calabasas Classic and the TFF: simple, efficient processes to reduce her workload and dedicated involvement from the community. A process put in place from the get-go was Active Network’s online registration running software. Julie did not have time to waste on manual data entry and needed event information to be organized and easily accessible, 24/7. “Of all the details to worry about,” Julie notes. “registrations and race payments were not one of them. Active provided an easy solution that saved me a ton of time and kept all of my participant data in a central database. I could focus on more important aspects of organizing the event.” And so she did. Julie leveraged every local resource she had to operate efficiently on a low budget. Volunteers and family members were deployed into the community to spread the word about the event; Julie’s father lent his artistic talents to design the event logos; Julie learned HTML code to manage the race website herself; event food, prizes and swag were donated entirely by local businesses; neighborhood running stores provided training plans for registrants; and Julie reached out to other Southern California event directors to cross-market to their athletes. Through diligent work with the community, the City, homeowners’ associations, the Chamber of Commerce, and the families supported by the Foundation, Julie grew and refined the Calabasas Classic each year.

## Go Green Case Study: 2010 Calabasas Classic

### Calabasas Classic Goes Green

With cost-conscious, economical practices already in place, it was a simple step for the Calabasas Classic to become part of Active Network's "Go Green" program, in partnership with Athletes For A Fit Planet LLC. Designed to encourage endurance sports to adopt green practices, Active's "Go Green" program rewards race organizations that commit to environmentally responsible practices. Event directors benefit from discounts on Active's marketing programs and road race management services, while promoting a healthy, responsible attitude that strikes a chord with consumers. The Calabasas Classic is the quintessential green event, having used eco-friendly practices for years because they were affordable, as well as environmental. "We didn't even realize we were green," mentions Julie. "I was just trying to cut down my workload and costs." Julie embraced the idea of the Go Green program and is dedicated to incorporating new ideas into her race that will help the planet.

For the 2010 Calabasas Classic, the Go Green Pledge of Sustainability includes the following:

- ▶ Race medals and pins made of recycled metals
- ▶ Race t-shirts made of recycled polyester and bamboo
- ▶ Paperless, online race registration, powered by Active Network
- ▶ Electronic, reusable race timing tags, provided by Road ID
- ▶ Recycling bins on-site
- ▶ Drop-off location for old cell phones and PDAs, to be recycled by Cellphone-4-Wishes
- ▶ Drop-off location for gently-used running shoes, to be given to underprivileged children by Share Our Soles
- ▶ VIP Parking for carpoolers
- ▶ Plastic water bottles sorted and recycled by the Recycling Club of Calabasas High School
- ▶ 80% of the event signage is reused
- ▶ 80% of event communications are non-paper
- ▶ Recyclable swag bags, provided by LuLuLemon
- ▶ No paper in the swag bags—coupons and offers can be claimed online on the Calabasas Classic "Swag Page"

### Implementation

For the Calabasas Classic, the most notable benefit of going green has been the money saved by eliminating paper. After the 2009 event, Julie did an analysis on the effectiveness of her paper brochures and quickly came to the realization that they were minimally effective. It was an easy decision for her to get rid of the brochures completely for 2010, saving over \$5,000 and countless hours of labor. The results from using only email marketing to drive participation have been dramatic—statistically, race registrations are four months ahead of last year's numbers.

The green initiatives are also beneficial because they are affordable. Going green is not costing the Calabasas Classic a dime. Local vendors have partnered with Julie to incorporate eco-friendly tactics into donations they were already providing. The public, strongly invested in the race and the Foundation, has responded positively to the Go Green program. Julie is expecting over 2,000 runners at this year's event and more than 4,000 spectators—an increase of hundreds of people. The TFF also hit the \$2.5 million milestone in fundraising. Julie attributes her success to three factors: she has never raised the registration fees, the community support offsets most of her costs, and people connect with the altruistic aspects of both the TFF and the Go Green program. Over the past seven years, the Calabasas Classic has consistently offered a high-quality, unique event that has become well-loved by the community. It will continue to prosper—Julie recently signed a five-year contract extension with the City of Calabasas. Stay tuned to watch what new ideas she comes up with next!

### Words of Wisdom – Advice from Julie Talbert, Calabasas Classic Event Director

1. Piggyback onto community supporters. It's affordable and they will feel invested in your event.
2. Cut down on paper brochures and flyers—they are minimally effective. We saved over \$5,000 by eliminating them.
3. Commit to a Pledge of Sustainability. Your race will resonate with participants and it helps the planet. It's no extra work to go green—in fact, it can save you a lot of work.