

Kids compete in triathlons

JOE MILLER, Staff Writer

Three years ago, Maylene Jackson had an epiphany. As a mom to school-age kids Sydney and JT, she was becoming increasingly alarmed by the lack of physical activity her kids were getting in school, not to mention the growing creep of junk food into the school lunch menu.

As a certified strength and conditioning coach, she realized the outside help that could aid kids typically was available only to families with money.

So she came up with Kids in Training, a nonprofit organization that aims to "promote lifelong fitness habits" through participation in endurance sports.

"These are the activities we did as a kid ourselves," Jackson writes on the Kids in Training Web site, "swim, bike and run, when our mothers told us to go out and play."

Unfortunately, she notes, children today have safe places to go out and play, and the number of two-income households cuts down on the time parents have to swim, bike and run with their kids.




Enter KIT, which offers after-school programs, nutrition counseling and endurance training for kids. One of its training programs is for its Triangle-based nine-race series, which began in April and runs into December. Some of the races are full triathlons (scaled down to suit various ages), others may entail only a run or a bike ride and a run.

The fee is generally \$20 to \$30 for the races, but financial aid is available.

The next race on KIT's schedule is the KIT Tri @ Meadowmont, a triathlon for kids age 5 through 14. The Chapel Hill event is divided by age group into age-appropriate dimensions.

Kids in the 5 to 7 age category, for instance, will swim 50 yards in the Meadowmont pool (that's one lap, or two lengths), bike a mile and a half through the Meadowmont community on streets closed to traffic, then run a half-mile on an out-and-back course. The 11-14 age group, on the other hand, will swim 150 yards (three laps, or six lengths), bike 4.5 miles (three laps on the same closed course the 5- to 7-year-olds ride) and run a mile and a half.

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Details

WHAT Kids in Training Triathlon

WHEN July 29; packet pickup and bike setup begins at 7 a.m., race at 8:30 a.m.

WHERE Meadowmont Swim Club, Chapel Hill.

COST \$35 (participants must belong to USA Triathlon; memberships are \$5, at www.usatmembership.com).

RACE DIMENSIONS 5-7 age group: 50-yard swim, 1.5-mile bike ride, 1/2-mile run; 8-10: 100-yard swim, 3-mile bike ride, 1 mile run; 11-14: 150-yard swim, 4.5-mile bike ride, 1.5-mile run.

ADDITIONAL RACES Aug. 26, Wakefield Plantation, Raleigh; Sept. 23, TBA; Oct. 15, Lake Crabtree, Morrisville; Nov. 5, TBA, Raleigh; Dec. 3, Jingle Run & Taffy Pull, Raleigh.

MORE INFO 372-7032, www.kidsintraining.com, info@kidsintraining.com.

What else is going on?

Looking for something active to do this weekend? Check out the following Web sites.

www.endurancemag.com -- Endurance Magazine's rundown of triathlons, runs and endurance events throughout the region.

www.ncsparks.net -- Find information on state parks and recreation areas and programs offered, here at the N.C. Division of Parks & Recreation Web site.

<http://ncbikeclub.org>, www.tarwheels.org -- Looking for a bike ride? The N.C. Bicycle Club and Carolina Tarwheels Web sites include information on standing rides and event rides. You'll also find que sheets for popular local routes.

www.trianglemtb.com -- Everything you need to know about local mountain biking, from where the trails are, to whether that thunderstorm last night has temporarily closed a trail.

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Kids new to the race series can attend a training session July 27 from 6 to 7 p.m. to become familiar with the course.

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Staff writer Joe Miller can be reached at 812-8450 or jmiller@newsobserver.com.