



The Vascular Birthmarks Foundation  
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## News Release

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### **Runners on Their Mark in Helping Raise Awareness and Acceptance for Vascular Birthmarks**

**Latham, NY, December 2, 2018 – The 4<sup>th</sup> annual Purple Polka Dot Race benefitting The Vascular Birthmarks Foundation (VBF)** will take place on **August 11, 2019** at [Stony Creek Metropark](#) located at 4300 Main Park Dr, Shelby Charter Township, MI 48316 There is a \$10 fee per car to enter Stony Creek if you do not already have an Oakland County Parks vehicle permit.

Race director and founder, Jody Lee said the event provides support to the community.

“We [my family] have been so blessed and so lucky to have the constant support and love from both our community and sponsors,” she said. “Not only our original sponsors like [Orangetheory Fitness](#), [Rainbow Child Care Center](#), and the [University of Michigan Department of Dermatology](#) but the ones we added in recent years have been so amazing and part of our Purple Polka Dot family.”

All proceeds from the race directly benefit The Vascular Birthmarks Foundation (VBF) to continue research and provide the medical, psychological, and emotional support to families affected by vascular birthmarks.

Pre-race registration with varying price levels will be as follows:

- March 2–May 12: \$30
- May 12–July 21: \$35
- July 21–Race Day: \$40

Packet Pickup and day-of-race registration begins at 7:30am and the 5k run/walk begins at 8:30 a.m.

Lee said the inspiration for the Purple Polka Dot Race stems from the birth of her oldest daughter Meghana who, Lee said arrived with 10 fingers, 10 toes and a special birthmark on her cheek and chin.

“Months later we found out that her birthmark was something called a port wine stain (PWS) – a kind of vascular birthmark. We [my husband and I] immediately started our search for answers and came across the Vascular Birthmarks Foundation (VBF),” she said. “The VBF has not only provided us with answers but also with a sense of community and support system unlike any other.”

The name “Purple Polka Dot” is derived from the result of the laser treatments applied to the birthmark which cause her to have temporary purple polka dots on her face.

The 2019 race will be the fourth. Since the event began in 2016, it has grown exponentially every year and raised a little over \$45,000 to date. The first year featured approximately 80-90 participants largely made up of friends and family but last year, the event grew to over 200 participants. On the idea of expanding the event, Jody says: “The dream is to have something [this race] take place across the country, not just here [in Michigan].”

For more information on the Purple Polka Dot Race, you are encouraged to visit <https://purplepolkadotrace.com>, e-mail [purplepolkadotrace@gmail.com](mailto:purplepolkadotrace@gmail.com) or connect on social media. [facebook.com/purplepolkadotrace](https://www.facebook.com/purplepolkadotrace), [twitter.com/PPDR5K](https://twitter.com/PPDR5K)

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### **About The Vascular Birthmarks Foundation (VBF)**

Dr. Linda Rozell Shannon is the President and Founder of the Vascular Birthmarks Foundation.

In 1994, her daughter, Christine Mary Shannon, was diagnosed with a hemangioma in 1994.

Since its inception in 1994, VBF has successfully networked thousands of children and adults into treatment, sponsored significant research, educated physicians and affected family members about the diagnosis and treatment of vascular birthmarks and has established chapters all over the world. For more information, please visit <https://birthmark.org/> Please visit us on social media: [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [YouTube](#).