

Run *from B1*

was also recent run of five years of 25-plus kids on the team.

And yet, numbers and statistics tell only part of the story.

Family

In speaking with many of those who have been impacted by Settelmeyer over the years, that one word — family — comes up over and over. Perhaps that's not surprising, given that he's part of a large family himself, and that his wife and two sons, Sam and Teagan, have figured so prominently in his coaching and beyond.

Yet, the concept of family has, over time, come to mean something deeper to the Settelmeyers and, by extension, Cottage Grove cross country itself.

"He always made it seem like a family event," said Rob Scoggin, whose children, Kenshin and Kanna, were coached by Settelmeyer. "All of the kids were part of the family. And he seemed to always make it fun."

Jim's brother, Jerry Settelmeyer, himself a life-long educator, could often be found helping out wherever running or other events were taking place. He says it's clearly part of his family's ethos.

"It's always been a real satisfying feeling when you can see people helping other people," Jerry said. "The Settelmeyers always have parties, and we always celebrate. And the best part of it is, we almost always have work parties. We're celebrating each other by working together and actually accomplishing something."

Naturally, this approach lends itself remarkably well to the work, collaboration and celebration involved in running cross country. And yet, when asked about the role his own upbringing has played in his philosophy, Jim Settelmeyer pauses a while before responding.

"I grew up one of 10 children, mostly in Cottage Grove," he says. "Growing up here, I had lots of interactions with community in very positive ways. I saw a lot of really positive things that sports could do. I saw the power of turning kids loose to use their energy and giving them opportunities to use their energy in positive pursuits."

Of course, young people, and people in general, don't always use their energy in positive pursuits. In these instances, the deeper notion of family — that we share a common bond and common goals and must work together in common understanding to achieve them — also comes

into play.

"I know for a fact that he helped several kids that were having education issues and social issues, to get out of that kind of social life," Scoggin recalls. "And these kids have now grown up and had children and are having successful families of their own. Without having Jim there and Joyce helping, I think they would have wandered off the grid."

Still, Scoggin says that, despite the closeness of the Settelmeyer family, Sam and Teagan were given no special favors when it came to cross country.

"There was no favoritism," he said. "In fact, I think he might have even been a little harder on them."

For his part, Teagan Settelmeyer — now in residency in Chicago to become certified in emergency medicine — remembers being part of the action from the moment his dad became a coach.

"Our whole family was oriented toward that production," he said. "It was what we did for fun, what we did year-round. I can't imagine growing up without it; it was such a big part of our upbringing. It was always part of the routine, either jog club or cross country, which was my favorite part of the year."

"Being able to work with both of my sons through

cross country not only gave me wonderful experiences I will always cherish, it allowed me to morph my outlook of what defines success for athletes on a team," Settelmeyer said. "Introducing the ideas of 'family adventures' and with it 'family values' into the team culture became second nature."

School

Of course, legions of Cottage Grove High School students also remember Jim Settelmeyer as their science teacher. Over a 37-year career, he's had the opportunity to teach more than one generation, and he says the job always melded well with coaching.

"I'd like to think that giving kids opportunities to learn how to be a positive problem solver drove the basis of everything I did, whether as a teacher or as a coach," he said. "Those learning opportunities don't come from telling somebody every step of the way how to be successful. Everybody is unique, and every situation is unique, but it felt like a really good fit."

Of course, in the hierarchy of priorities, school does come before sports.

"I saw lots of wonderful efforts from kids in working at school, and at times it was great to hear that a student wasn't going to be at practice

because something important came up with family or school," he said.

Running

Countless miles have been logged by CG's cross country athletes during Settelmeyer's tenure, of course, but it's also worth noting the many adventures that his teams embarked upon.

"We got a chance to go to the redwoods," he recalls. "Our teams visited Boise, and there was the season-ending Nike regional cross country meet. Traditionally we went to Seaside, where we spent the night in a hotel, which was a big deal. We always went to early-season non-traditional running events, and almost every meet was some kind of adventure because we would invariably stop and do some kind of not-so-traditional food."

Among those who lent several helping hands were brother Jerry, assistant Brian Volmer-Buhl, Leilagh Boyle and Chris Klein. He also cited the help of supportive parents of runners including Monica and Kevin Yoss and the late Steve Miller, who continued to help long after their kids had graduated. He also pointed out that the support of South Lane School District's grounds and maintenance department was invaluable.

Over time, with some years

more successful than others, Settelmeyer continued to preach the value of running as a healthful pursuit, a fantastic way to channel and release energy and challenge oneself.

"There are a lot of people that run around a lot of communities for a reason other than trying to set a new personal record," he said. "It has to do with general positive well-being, and it's wellness plan that a lot of people could benefit from. There are some of my athletes that have become lifelong runners, and some not so much. Some got away from it, and now they're back. It's funny to see former runners come back and not want to admit that they don't run anymore, like they're going to get in trouble or something."

Of course, if they talk to their old coach long enough, he might be able to convince them to lace up the sneakers again. And whether or not they still log lots of miles, he said he hopes that his athletes have carried the lessons learned in cross country with them throughout their lives.

"It is my hope that all athletes left the program with the knowledge that running is a positive part of a healthy lifestyle, that helping others brings personal reward, and the feeling of being a part of a family adventure," he said.



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