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**Kayla Bernardi Bee Positive charity run set for Jan. 28**

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By

Tim Linden

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The eighth annual Kayla Bernardi Bee Positive 5K Fun Run/Walk will be held Jan. 28, 2023 in Turlock, CA, to honor the late daughter of Joe Bernardi, president and CEO of Bernardi & Associates. Registration is now open at [beepositivefoundation.org](https://beepositivefoundation.org).



The Bernardi family.

Kayla Bernardi was born on Jan. 31, 1995, with Down Syndrome and had to overcome multiple open heart surgeries before her first birthday. She did survive her childhood, though she had multiple health issues and did succumb to leukemia at the age of 20 in 2015. Her mother, Cathie Bernardi,

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recently told *The Produce News* that in honoring their daughter, the Bernardi Family launched the Bee Positive Foundation to honor her life-long positive attitude in the face of many hardships. Joe Bernardi chimed in that she was a very active child, leading to her nickname “Busy Bee” and hence the foundation name.

After the seventh annual event last January, *The Produce News* covered the story and Bernardi said that it generated lots of interest from colleagues in the industry, who asked to be updated on the 2023 fun run. “We had a lot of positive feedback and people want to be involved in the 2023 event,” he said, adding that organizing and fundraising kicked off the first week of November.

In 2022, about 350 runners/walkers participated in Turlock, with a total of more than 500 runners across the country. Cathie Bernardi said that travel restrictions during COVID, caused the BEE Positive Foundation to launch a virtual event, which has expanded participation to anywhere in the country. “We had people participants in Buffalo, Denver, Philly, Oregon, Hawaii — from all over,” Joe said.

Cathie runs the home-based mail effort, making sure a t-shirt gets to each participant. Joe says everyone is asked to walk, run, hike or do whatever they can to celebrate Kayla’s life and spread her message of positivity. “And then send us a photo,” he added.

Over the past seven years, the foundation has raised more than \$500,000 for charities. After the run, they determine the charities for this year and attempt to deliver those checks on March 8, which was the date Kayla died. “It helps us get through that day,” said Cathie.

In fact, she said the entire effort is a way to help the Bernardi family grieve its loss and turn a negative into a positive. “Some days it’s hard but this effort definitely helped our hearts heal.”

For 2023, Cathie has set a goal of having 600 participants “because each year we are trying to reach more people with Kayla’s message.”

Besides the BEE Postive website, interested parties can sign up on active.com, a website devoted to races, local events and things to do.

[Tim Linden](#)



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## About Tim Linden |

Tim Linden grew up in a produce family as both his father and grandfather spent their business careers on the wholesale terminal markets in San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Tim graduated from San Diego State University in 1974 with a degree in journalism. Shortly thereafter he began his career at The Packer where he stayed for eight years, leaving in 1983 to join Western Growers as editor of its monthly magazine. In 1986, Tim launched Champ Publishing as an agricultural publishing specialty company.

Today he is a contract publisher for several trade associations and writes extensively on all aspects of the produce business. He began writing for The Produce News in 1997, and currently wears the title of Editor at Large.

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