

Riverside, Sikich Foundation co-host kids' triathlon

*Aug. 23 event open to
kids 7 to 18 years old*

By **JACOB BOYER**

Contributing Reporter

The toll eating disorders and the associated health issues take on children, or anyone for that matter, can be severe. Tara Gregus, a Riverside resident who has, among other things, served as a swim coach, is well aware of this problem.

Four years ago, as Gregus was looking for ways that kids could become more physically active, she proposed to the Riverside Department of Parks and Recreation that they stage a children's triathlon. While the timing didn't work out in 2004, it has come together this summer and for the first time ever Riverside will host Cori's Kids Triathlon.

The first annual Cori's Kids Triathlon will take place on Aug. 23 at the Riverside Swim Club with the starting gun sounding at 8 a.m. The triathlon is open to kids between the ages of seven and 18 and costs \$30 to enroll. Deadline for registration is Aug. 1.

Participants will be split into three age groups. The youngest group (7 to 10) will swim 100 meters, bike 1.6 miles, and finish with a half mile run. Kids 11-14 will start with 150 meters in the pool, hop on their bicycles and ride 3.2 miles, before running one mile.

The oldest competitors (15 to 18 years old) will swim 300 meters, ride for 4.8 miles, and make their way to the finish line after running 1.6 miles.

Gregus, who has participated in triathlons for over 15 years, has noticed a trend

of younger people taking part in the events. She figured "why not bring an event like this to Riverside?"

Certainly the event is meant to be fun for all who participate, but there is a distinct purpose behind the annual competition.

"Because of the rising rate of childhood obesity, anything we can do to promote wellness, that is also fun, is very beneficial," said Gregus.

With the message behind the triathlon in mind, Gregus described the marriage between the event and its primary sponsor (as well as namesake), the Cori Sikich Foundation, as a "perfect blend."

Cori Sikich lived in Riverside until 1988, when she and her family moved to Virginia. For seven years Cori struggled with an eating disorder. The eating problems she spent years fighting put extra stress on her heart, leading to a heart arrhythmia and ultimately claiming her life.

The Village of Riverside has honored Cori in the past. On the west end of Patriot Park sits "Cori's Corner," where every September from 2001 to 2007 the village held the Cori Sikich Health and Wellness Seminar. The triathlon will build on the efforts of the seminars from the past seven years.

Laure Kosey, Riverside's director of parks and recreation, has aided Gregus in her efforts to make the triathlon a reality.

"We're very excited, it is going to be a great event," Kosey said.

So far, 50 kids have signed up to be a part of the inaugural event, according to Kosey.

For more information call 442-7025 or search "triathlon" on the Village of Riverside's website, at www.riverside.il.us, where registration forms are available.