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COURTESY PHOTO

Syd Blue's novel, "FlyGirl," is inspired by stories of pilots she has met. She is a pilot herself.

## 'FLYGIRL'

# Pilot takes flight as author

By Megan McClain  
Correspondent

A local author has written a young-adult novel inspired by the experiences of herself and fellow aviators and hopes to inspire youth that they can overcome any obstacle.

Syd Blue's novel "FlyGirl" is about a young girl who takes flight lessons after finding out a man whom she had a crush on likes female pilots and develops a passion for flying. Blue said "FlyGirl" has part been inspired by stories from pilots she has known over the years.

"It does have some of the fun flight stories that happened to me or pilots I know," she said.

The young adult author got her flying start living in Redlands and flying at the

## HELPING OUT

# More than 10,000 hit the streets for 6th Believe Walk

By Kristina Hernandez  
[kristina.hernandez@inlandnewspapers.com](mailto:kristina.hernandez@inlandnewspapers.com)  
[@TheFactsKris](https://twitter.com/TheFactsKris) on Twitter

REDLANDS » Ready. Set. Believe.

Those three words kicked off the sixth annual Believe Walk in downtown Redlands on Sunday. More than 10,000 walked to honor those affected by cancer.

Cathy Stockton, Annie Sellas and Nancy Varner of Inland Women Fighting Cancer, and Stater Bros. Charities Chairman and CEO Jack Brown cheered and threw their fists in the air as walkers made their way from the main staging area on Sixth Street onto the course where participants could either walk or run a 5K or 10K route.

Stockton, Sellas and Varner founded the annual event six years ago around the same times Stater Bros.' charitable foundation was founded.

Since its first walk in 2008, more than \$1.7 million has been raised for Inland Empire medical facilities that provide treatment, support groups or other means to residents.

Close to \$500,000 was raised at this year's effort, organizers said.

Sunday's walk was led by Christina Milian of Highland, a breast-cancer survivor whose team, Christina's Cancer Crushers, raised the most money, \$7,544.50.

Following the Highland woman's team were Stater Bros. Distribution-Double D's — Distribution Delivers with \$7,479, Team Half Full with \$7,022.

Others in the top 10 were Reche Canyon Delivers, Team Schvitz'n and Fighting Cancer with Sarah.



RACHEL LUNA — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The 5K breast-cancer awareness walk begins at the sixth annual Believe Walk in downtown Redlands on Sunday. More than 10,000 people participated.

"It's all about the communities here," Milian said Thursday. "And I like that fact — that we know where the funds are going."

Milian, who was diagnosed in 2008, had a team of around 90 supporters come out in full force Sunday.

Dozens of teams, individuals and four-legged friends joined them — some in costume, some carrying signs and others fully dressed in pink from head to toe.

Mary Loya-Gonzalez was one of them.

Dressed in a magenta "Pink" tee with a white tutu, the Redlands resident walked to honor her friends fighting the disease, but also herself.

She was diagnosed with uterine cancer in 2007.

"I'm doing good so far, and I get tested every two months," she said, taking a break to stir an iced drink in her hand.

"The cells have shredded but keep coming back. I caught (the cancer) by assessing my own body. Often people tend to not to follow up or listen to their body, but you need to pay atten-

tion. I found my cancer by accident twice."

Similar stories could be heard as participants walked the route. Music had participants dancing as they made their way to the Redlands Bowl, where the fun was just getting started.

More than 50 vendors were at the Bowl. More than 800 volunteers donated their time passing out gift bags, refreshments and goodies along the way as well.

"One of the differences between what you're doing today and other walks is that every penny stays here locally," Brown said at a pep rally to get participants pumped up for the race around 7:50 a.m. "Nobody gets paid. Everybody is a volunteer. So from that standpoint, this is what makes it different. This is what (Stockton, Sellas and Varner) have dedicated themselves to do.

"They're survivors. They understand your pain if you lost someone."

To learn more, visit [believeinlandempire.com](http://believeinlandempire.com).

## BUSINESS

# Redlands hold grand

By Kristina Hernandez  
[kristina.hernandez@inlandnewspapers.com](mailto:kristina.hernandez@inlandnewspapers.com)  
[@TheFactsKris](https://twitter.com/TheFactsKris) on Twitter

REDLANDS » Michelle's Bakery is inviting the community to celebrate grand reopening and 25th anniversary on Wednesday.

The bakery will hold an open house-style event from 4 to 7 p.m., with a ribbon-cutting scheduled for 6 p.m.

Michelle's has been operating since 1985, first baking cakes for area restaurants.

It then expanded to preparing a variety of desserts, and opened its doors to the public a short time later, becoming known for its first signature cake, the Raspberry Victorian.

"No matter whether it's raspberry or strawberry, the Victorian has become one of the most sought-after cakes in the Inland Empire," event organizers said in a news release.

A new space and a technology upgrade will be part of the grand reopening.

"We hear stories of people first coming to M

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Redlands Daily Facts  
READER'S CHOICE

Redlands and flying at the Redlands Municipal Airport.

"I call it my 'field of dreams' because it's gorgeous there," she said.

Now a Big Bear resident, Blue flies out of the Redlands airport regularly while working her aerial surveillance route.

Redlands resident Randall Johnson, who got his start flying in the Korean War, said that he was proud of his daughter's aviation skills.

"It's a great deal of pride that we see her coming over," he said of her almost weekly trips over their house. Three of Blue's siblings are also in the aviation field.

Blue said of flying, "It really helps grow you and pushes you to your limit."

Blue is also pursuing a career in motivational speaking, speaking about taking on challenges and rising above them. She also hopes to inspire children to consider aviation.

According to the FAA's Aeronautical Center, less than 7 percent of pilots are women.

Blue's website SydBlue.com also has videos, a blog, stories of female pilots and a book trailer for the novel that was filmed at the Redlands airport.

Blue has also written a second young adult novel, "Circle," about a boy who must help an extraterrestrial home. She will be signing books at the Apple Valley Air Show Oct. 12.

Local children who want a chance to experience flying a plane can with the Young Eagles program, which offers a free lesson to children ages 8-17. The next date for the lessons at Redlands Municipal Airport is Oct. 19.

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