

**Tips for Parents** by Susie Kohl

## *Keeping Values In Perspective*

**I**S IT MORE IMPORTANT TO WIN THE RACE or to stop to help a sick competitor? That's the question 12th grader Liana Blomgren asked herself when she saw one of her competitors lying on the track field, unable to go on. Under the rules of the Minnesota State High School League, any runner physically assisting another runner results in immediate disqualification for both.

Liana was familiar with the rules but decided she didn't care about the consequences, even though she didn't know the other runner. "I knew she wasn't going to get to the finish line by herself, and I knew that she needed somebody, and nobody else was there for her," the 12th grader reported. Liana helped the fallen runner off the ground and supported her as they both crossed the finish line. Both runners were disqualified, but her admirable gesture was reported in news stories across the country.

We live in an area where "being the first to cross the finish line" when it comes to grades or athletics can be seen as an overriding ethos that obscures other, more important life values, like concern for others. Young people suffer the most when principles like compassion are diminished for the sake of competition, as it's often hard to maintain a loving attitude toward themselves if they fall short of the mark.

Kind acts do make a difference. The Minnesota State High School League will be allowing runners to assist other competitors in 2017. Children can learn from good positive stories in the media, especially during these times when the news often promulgates fear.

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