

# Teachable Moment: Arkansas Man Gives Family Lesson in Resilience at Star Wars Half Marathon – The Dark Side

**Wheelchair competitor** Kurt Blankenship (**Little Rock, Ark.**) remarkably won the men's push rim wheelchair division of the *Star Wars* Half Marathon – The Dark Side at Walt Disney World Resort on Sunday, with a time of 1:27:46. But it was more of an **education for his wife and children** than anything else. That's because Blankenship's three children – Ella, Olivia and Ryan – are **wrestling with their own challenges** as a result of all being **born premature**, and Blankenship took on the weighty challenge of a half marathon to teach them the true measure of resilience.

All three kids participated in the 200-meter run during the *runDisney* Kids Races on Saturday, a major triumph for **all three, but especially Ryan, who has spina bifida and was not expected to ever walk or talk**.

Blankenship was paralyzed from the waist down in 1999 after a near-fatal car accident. For years, he struggled to adjust to his new reality. Things changed when he and his wife, Carrie, started a family. Blankenship views his children's medical challenges as motivation to be an inspirational example of persistence and fortitude.

In talking about Blankenship's teachable moment, his wife, Carrie, often cites the well-known anonymous quote: "A bird sitting on a tree is never afraid of the branch breaking because its trust is not on the branch but in its own wings."

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