

Run for the Funny of It: When Laughter Meets Purpose – A Night to Support Healing, Hope, and the Human Spirit

By Valerie Milano

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In an era where entertainment increasingly intersects with meaningful social impact, one event stands out not only for its laughs, but for its heart. *Run for the*



RENÉE

"EIGHT YEARS AGO, I THOUGHT MY RUNNING DAYS WERE OVER. AS AN ADDICT IN RECOVERY AND A ONCE-INJURED ATHLETE, I'VE LEARNED THAT HEALING TAKES PATIENCE, FAITH, AND COMMUNITY. IN MARCH, I'M RUNNING LA MARATHON WITH STRIDES IN RECOVERY – PROOF THAT ANYTHING CAN BE REBUILT, ONE STRIDE AT A TIME."

Funny of It, a mission-driven comedy fundraiser taking place on February 1, 2026, brings together laughter, community, and a powerful cause: supporting individuals on the path to addiction recovery through Strides in Recovery.

A promotional graphic for the event. On the left is a photo of comedian Craig Shoemaker, wearing a blue t-shirt that says "super-spreader of love, light, truth and gratitude" under a black jacket. On the right is a photo of Renée Santos. The text is in a pink, bubbly font.

A Night of Laughter for a Cause
Sunday, Feb 1st, 2026 @ 5pm

@ THE CROW COMEDY CLUB, Santa Monica, CA
Headlining Iconic comedian Craig Shoemaker
(shhhh... you did not hear it from us).

Left – legend Craig Shoemaker, Right -Renée Santos

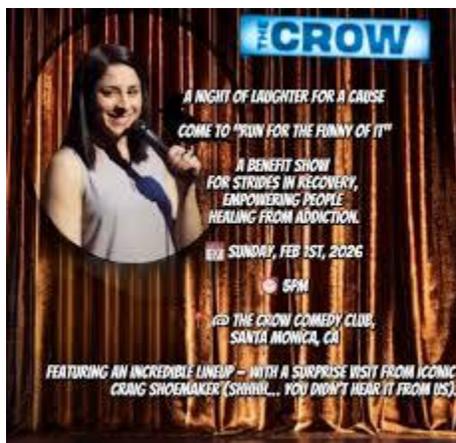
At the helm of this effort is Renée Santos – a multi-hyphenate performer, seasoned comic, producer, and journalist whose work moves seamlessly between comedy and dramatic storytelling. Also, a Strides in Recovery coach, Santos is known for her sharp stand-up, her acclaimed one-woman solo show *CROSSROADS*, and her work across television, film, and major streaming platforms including Amazon Prime, Roku, and Tubi. For more than a decade, she has built a career that blends artistry, advocacy, and authentic human connection.

But this night isn't just about comedy, it's about that connection.



“I’ve always believed laughter can be one of the deepest forms of human resilience,” says Santos, who also serves as a coach with Strides in Recovery, helping participants build both emotional and physical stamina through community, movement, and mutual support.

Strides in Recovery isn't your typical nonprofit. This Los Angeles based organization harnesses the transformative power of running, from 5Ks to full marathons, to support individuals recovering from addiction. Through structured training, coaching, and camaraderie, participants rebuild confidence, discipline, and hope. Teams of runners, many in early sobriety, cross mile markers that represent milestones not just in fitness, but in life.



On February 1, comedy becomes another bridge to that mission.

Headlining *Run for the Funny of It* is comedy legend Craig Shoemaker, a two-time Emmy Award winner and one of stand-up comedy's most beloved voices. With decades on stages around the world and a reputation for using humor as a healing tool, Shoemaker brings not only laughs, but greater visibility to the work of Strides in Recovery and the runners it serves.

“This event is an invitation,” Santos says, “to celebrate joy, resilience, and the hope that comes when community rallies behind those who need it most.”

Fundraising through events like this one enables Strides in Recovery runners, including Santos herself, to participate in the Los Angeles Marathon while ensuring that vital

coaching, training resources, and support networks remain accessible to those working toward sustained recovery.

In Strides' model, raising funds is about more than financial support; it's about visibility, encouragement, and showing individuals in early recovery that they are seen, cheered for, and valued. For Carlos* (name shared with permission), crossing his first marathon finish line wasn't about speed, it was about proving to himself that he could finish what addiction once interrupted. For many, crossing that tape represents nothing less than a triumph of the human spirit.

Santos' own journey reflects this ethos. With over twelve years of sobriety, a flourishing career in comedy, and a growing presence as both a creative and a coach, she embodies the power of strength paired with vulnerability.

"Humor doesn't erase pain," she says. "But it can be a companion on the journey through it."

Run for the Funny of It takes place at The Crow Comedy in Santa Monica, with doors opening at 5:00 PM. All ticket sales and donations directly support Strides in Recovery's programs — helping runners train, build community, and cross finish lines they once thought were impossible.