

PROFILES IN GIVING

Running for a Cause

Robert Reffkin rarely slows down. The 30-year-old New Yorker, a vice president in Goldman Sachs Group Inc.'s private-equity arm, has run a marathon a month for the past two years and is halfway through his goal of hitting one marathon in every state. It isn't about the exercise or travel. Rather, Mr. Reffkin is seeking to raise \$1 million for nine youth organizations, some of which supported him as a child.

Mr. Reffkin, who was raised by a single mother in Berkeley, Calif., has pledged the money to organizations including Prep for Prep, which prepares minority students for elite high schools, and the education group A Better Chance. Mr. Reffkin credits A Better Chance, as well as the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship, Sponsors for Educational Opportunity and Summer Search, with leading him to an Ivy League school and successful career.

He now sits on the board of the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship and is a past Summer Search board member. He also volunteers with Sponsors for Educational Opportunity, which helps to prepare students of color for college admissions and internships.

Mr. Reffkin, who declines to say how much he donates financially to



these organizations, says he wouldn't be satisfied with just writing them a check.

"One of the best parts about this whole effort is that it has inspired others to give money, it has inspired others to run their own marathon fund-raising efforts, it has inspired others to get to know these programs that they otherwise would not have known," Mr. Reffkin says. "Giving a check is great, it's money, but it doesn't get more people to care

about [the groups], to know them."

Mr. Reffkin, who tracks his progress at Runningtosupportyoungdreams.com, has run 26 marathons already and plans to hit 29 by year-end. So far he has collected more than \$583,000 in pledges and \$221,000 in donations (some patrons are waiting until he runs all 50 races before giving their money). He has vowed to make up the difference if he falls short of his \$1 million goal.

—Melissa Korn