



The StrideRight

www.floridastriders.com

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March – April 2024

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Presidents Corner

By Joni Neidigh



Hello Strider Family!

As you all know running is much more than just putting one foot in front of the other and for our club it is about having fun, developing lasting friendships, and contributing to our community. The Resolution Run helped to start our 2024 doing all of those things. We watched as all ages and levels of runners and walkers competed in the 5k along beautiful River Road in Orange Park. Following the 5k we observed many families and youth compete in the Resolution Fun Run. As you will see in this newsletter 10 schools in our Run/Walk club programs received monetary awards that were sponsored by Bestbet, and they were all appreciative as Carol Macdougall personally delivered the checks. How wonderful to start the year off by representing our mission this way!

I have absolutely loved serving as president of this amazing club, and I hope to continue for one more term. As many of you know my parents, Tom and Dot Johnston introduced me to the Florida Striders back in the 80's and my son, Josh Volpe, a Clay County Paramedic and Firefighter, ran his first mile at age 3. This was his first introduction to athletics and an important one.

There are many reasons to love our club but my biggest why is serving a non-profit that does so much for our youth. Our Children's Running Program is outstanding and contributes significant skills and lessons to the children who participate. It is understood that regular exercise improves the physical and mental health of children and that these opportunities are often limited. Our program helps children achieve fitness goals in a supportive environment that boosts self-esteem and confidence. They really love receiving the t-shirts and awards for their accomplished run/walk miles.

Our program also teaches goal setting, perseverance, team building and provides social interaction. There are many young people who struggle with social skills and the running program helps them to get to know and bond with others as they communicate about overcoming the challenges that come with running. As a licensed counselor, I have seen the direct impact that these opportunities have provided and how overcoming obstacles in running has translated to resilience in other areas of their lives. The benefits go far beyond what I have mentioned, and I want all of you to know that when you sign up to become a member or renew your membership that this is one of the most important contributions to our community that you have ever made or will ever make. Thank you for being a Florida Strider!

With tremendous appreciation,
Joni

Meet Your Board of Directors 2023-2024

2023-2024 Officers and Board of Directors

Officers

President: Joni Neidigh
president@floridastriders.com

Vice President: George
Barthelmes, IV
vpresident@floridastriders.com

Secretary: Britta Fortson
secretary@floridastriders.com

Treasurer: Adam Cross
treasurer@floridastriders.com



Coordinators

Children's Running: Carol MacDougall
cmacdougall@bellsouth.net

Track Coordinator: Mike Tibble
striderstrackop@gmail.com

Membership: Eugene Biala
membership@floridastriders.com

Social: TBD

Scholarship: Kim Lundy
scholarship@floridastriders.com

Race Volunteer:

Registration: Kathy Murray
registration@floridastriders.com

Equipment: Suzanne Baker
Suzanne.baker@myoneclay.net

Race Advisor: Bill Krause
billkrause615@gmail.com

StrideRight Editor: Michelle Colina
striderighteditor@gmail.com

StrideRight Proofreader: TBD

Race Directors and Coordinators

Race Directors

Resolution Run 5K
JD Dillaberry
resolutionrunrd@floridastriders.com

Run To The Sun 5K
Adam Cross
rttsrd@floridastriders.com

MD5K
Adam Cross
md5krd@floridastriders.com

The Angry Tortoise 25K/50K
george.barthelmes@icloud.com

Hog Jog 5K
suzanne.baker@myoneclay.net

Striders Summer Classic
Treasurer@FloridaStriders.com

Strider's Sponsor Spotlight



Regina Soeey, a long-term sponsor, and former Board Member of the Florida Strider's Track Club is once again sponsoring the Angry Tortoise 25k / 50k! Regina was the first and sole sponsor of the Inaugural Angry Tortoise 25k in 2014.

Regina has lived in the Jacksonville area since 1980 and knows this market inside and out. Regina is an extremely successful realtor and should be your go to person if you're trying to buy or sell real estate. She'll deliver the same hard work and determination to meet your real estate needs as she does with her running. With over 21 years and around 750 closings later, she is proud and grateful to have grown an honest and ethical real estate practice one customer at a time. Regina will always go the extra mile for you!

You can count on her to give honest, well thought out advice in a consultative and not sales manner. She'll advise against a sale or purchase when she doesn't think it is in your best interest. She consults with her clients and together they explore the best plan to buy or sell their home, land, condominium, townhome, or investment property.



Regina considers many aspects of the transaction including, but not limited to the economy, laws and regulations, insurance, repair issues, investment considerations, long and short-term goals, financing considerations, and most of all whether the decision supports the customers; stated wants and needs.

Regina's broad educational and work background is invaluable in advising her customers: Economics Degree, Law Degree, Teaching English in Poland, Practicing Criminal Defense Litigation, working at 2 Startups, Staging Certification, Distressed Property Certification, RRCA Running Coach to name a few.

Real Estate has given her the time to pursue her other passions, and to give back. Running, hiking, traveling, playing tournament bridge, Coaching and supporting Marathon High and Team in Training. Sponsoring: Pace, PRS, Florida Striders, the Run for the Fallen, Freed to Run, and Sombrero Running makes her feel good and reminds her of her humble beginnings while helping others.

Regina should be your first contact for all your real estate needs and can be contacted via email at regina.sooey@gmail.com or by phone/text at (904) 673-0608.

Strider's Sponsor Spotlight



We're pleased to highlight one of our Strider's Championship Series Presenting Sponsors! BrightStar Merchant Services (<https://www.teambrightstar.com>) provides credit card processing solutions for businesses in a wide variety of industries including non-profits, anywhere in the United States. BrightStar has E-commerce, mobile, and Point of Sale solutions.

BrightStar Merchant Services provides you with the ability to accept all credit and debit cards (Visa, MasterCard, AMEX, Discover and beyond). BrightStar's system also allows you to accept payments using your mobile phone or tablet with their wireless processing service by connecting to all of your iOS and Android devices into a secure payment portal, so you'll never miss a sale. Feel free to contact him directly at (904) 505-0584 or jd@teambrightstar.com for a free no obligation service evaluation and quote.

The owner of BrightStar Merchant Services is Jason "JD" Dillaberry. JD is not only a member of the Florida Strider's Track Club, but he's also the Race Director for the Resolution Run. JD's wife Desiree did an outstanding job of taking the finish line photos at this year's Resolution Run that we posted to the Florida Strider's Facebook page.

Thank You JD and Desiree for your sponsorship and support of the Florida Strider's Track Club and the Children's running and walking programs that we support!

Strider's Sponsor Spotlight



We're pleased to highlight one of our long-term sponsors. United HealthCare Medicare Solutions (<https://www.myuhcagent.com/susan.halman>). United HealthCare Medicare Solutions offers a wide variety of products such as Medicare Advantage Plans, Medicare Supplement Insurance Plans, Dual Special Needs Plan (D-SNP) and Medicare Prescription Drug Plans (Part D).

Our contact with United Healthcare Medicare Solutions is Susan Halman and she can be reached at 321-508-3385 or sghalman@gmail.com. You can also meet Susan at the Run to the Sun or Memorial Day 5k races as she'll have a tent setup to be able to answer your questions in regards to United HealthCare Medicare supplemental insurance coverage policies.

Thank You United HealthCare and Susan for your sponsorship and support of the Florida Strider's Track Club and the Children's running and walking programs that we support!

Florida Striders College Scholarship Recipients' Essays

You Can Do More Than You Think You Can, Managing the Adversity and Challenge of a Serious Injury

By Keegan Emmanuel



Dig deep Keegan, go hard, one more lap. You can always do better than you think you can!

What's wrong with me? Am I no longer the competitive runner I once was? I had trained and competed my entire life. From my first race as a four-year-old, I was a runner. Yet, here I was, a sophomore in high school, barely able to complete 800 meters. Just two laps around the track and my legs were out of my control. With each effort to run, my legs looked increasingly reminiscent of exhausted marathoners at the finish line, unsteady and unable to stand, like a baby giraffe taking its first steps.

As I sat in a pediatric neurosurgeon's office hearing that I had suffered a spinal cord injury at the C5-C6 junction, fear and panic raced through my body. Learning that my injury was unique in that there was no fracture or dislocation of the vertebrae, my doctor explained that the injury likely occurred during a mountain bike accident I had just prior to the onset of my symptoms. Fortunately, I was not paralyzed, though physically I could no longer run. In the weeks and months after my diagnosis, my mind raced as I grappled with the nightmare of knowing my dreams of running in college were shattered.

As I poured myself into my physical therapy, a phrase that one of my running coaches would frequently offer to me as advice during rough training was forward in my mind: You can always do better than you think you can. These ten little words were

becoming a powerful and defining influence in my life. Physical therapy was demanding and hard, physically, and mentally. Leaning into the mental toughness I developed as an endurance athlete, I had to dig deep to get through therapy and to face the uncertainties ahead.

As I recovered physically, I floundered trying to fill the void. My peer group had always been other runners and I felt alone and isolated without that connection. I craved endurance and at the suggestion of my therapist and my parents, I decided to test the waters with swimming and reluctantly joined my high school's swim team. Swimming helped my physical and mental recovery and I found joy in the pool. As a senior now, while my recovery will never be complete and I will likely always suffer some spasticity and weakness in my legs, I am thrilled to be running again. I have recently joined the high school track team as a junior varsity runner. I'm running because I can. I push hard and with each mile, I hear my mantra and know that I can do better than I think I can. In the broader aspects of life, running and my recovery have shown me that my success isn't determined by time or placements, but rather drive, effort, and perseverance.

How has Running influenced your life

By Joseph Salazar



From my first 5K to my high school cross country career to my fifth half marathon (four of which were with Marathon High), I have always loved being a runner. I have learnt so much from my experience of being a runner and it has meant so much to me. At first, running was something that I did with my father and my brother to have fun when I was little. I was not a particularly good runner at that point in my life and yet it still meant a lot to me that it was something that I could do with my family. We always encouraged each other to keep going, even if we were tired and even if it was downpouring outside, and consequently strengthened our familial bonds. I remember the first 5K,

which was the 2013 Memorial Day 5K, that I ran with my dad and my brother, mostly because of how tiring it was. I could not run the whole thing yet, but my family helped

me to keep going, which signifies one of the most important things about running (at least to me). This was how running and training together builds strangers bonds and creates families. Whether it was with my brother and father or with my teammates on cross country, running has always provided me with a community I could feel a part of. The environment that this created for me was incredible and always helped to succeed and push past what I thought my limits were.

Running has also taught me that I need to work hard and be mentally strong to fight through the pain. After all, when it comes to race time there is no faking the amount of effort you put into your training. Regardless though, the countless hours of training have taught me that there is no easy path to success and if you want to do well then you will have to work for it. This aspect of my running has had a profound influence on my life as it has always pushed me to do better and give everything I can to whatever I was working on, whether that be a small homework assignment or a massive project. This strong work ethic has not only helped me to succeed but to thrive in the IB Programme at my school, which is one of the hardest high school programs in the world. It has helped me to become top of my class and will undoubtedly help me in college and with whatever life throws my way, all because of the skills that I learned from running.

Ultimately, running has had a profound influence on my life. It has helped me form and strengthen relationships with others and it has also shown me the importance of hard work. These skills will not only help me to succeed in college but thrive there just like I do right now.



Florida Strider Club Essay

By Katherine McCoy

My mom tried to convince me to try running competitively for years before I actually joined the cross-country team. Every time we did a family 5K, she would urge me to keep running after the race - which I never did. Then, when my brother came to my high school in his freshman year, he immediately joined cross country. I reluctantly joined him, mainly to help my parents drive him

to and from school. The first couple weeks were extremely difficult: the people on the team were already experienced runners and had been running all summer, so I was literally miles behind them in training. My muscles were sore nearly every day, and I did not understand why practices on Saturdays had to start at seven in the morning. After those first couple weeks, however, I noticed a shift in my attitude towards practices. I noticed how I looked forward to the stress relief of running for an hour between school and homework, and I noticed how proud of myself I felt after completing a difficult workout. Additionally, I developed a great community among my teammates. Nothing would bring me greater joy after a long, stressful school day than running by the river with my teammates, telling funny stories and listening to Taylor Swift. I began to love running, in part because I had a wonderful community to run with that supported my progress before I even decided to stay. This encouraged me to go to practice every day and work hard, and before I knew it, I dropped five minutes off my 5K race time, and I moved from JV to Varsity. I earned the coach's "Perseverance Award" for this season, and the following season, I was chosen as the girl's team captain. This encouraged me to share my strategies for improvement with the new team members and take extra care to support them the way my teammates had done for me. My new leadership role also encouraged me to work even harder because I had an example to set. I trained hard over my senior summer, even going to a running camp in North Carolina with the team, and I went into my senior season with even more motivation and grit than the year before. Running taught me the importance of discipline, but it also taught me the importance of supportive people to foster this discipline - something I hope to carry with me in other leadership roles and in my college experience.



Florida Strider Club Essay

By Katelyn Thompson

Throughout my experience in high school, despite all the Friday night lights it has impacted, or all the times I had to say "sorry I can't" to normal teenage activities, it's effortless to assert that a task so simple as running has changed my life for the better. The reversal of my perception of running is convoluted, even more so since my relationship with the sport hasn't always been so simple.

Initially, running was something I did to be like my mom, to be like my older brother, to stay in shape, to say I did a sport. Running was almost a chore. I recall in middle school, any excuse was utilized not to run, I wouldn't compete at my full potential, additionally the physical pain and exhaustion it implemented on me would trump the probability of any positive feelings towards the sport. I believe this is the way many individuals feel about running, or school, or work: a responsibility you perceive as undesirable but just have too much pride to quit. However, these days I can't imagine my life without it. Running is a part of a daily ritual and I feel as though I wouldn't be the same if it wasn't so prominent in my existence. Although it's difficult to say exactly what caused the shift in desire I had to run, a major component of the intrigue would be all the ways it improved my contentment and experience with the world. Beginning running, friends weren't a treasure I necessarily had, and I hadn't experienced much of the world outside of Florida. Running, however, changed that for me. I never truly admired my body, how much it does for me, what it's capable of, and how powerful I am until I fell in love with the sport. This concept can be applied to many of the seemingly undesirable components of life: learn to admire something and see how it changes you. Although running is simply a repetitive, physically demanding action, it brings me closer to my loved ones. I run with my friends quite literally every day, and I believe it's what makes our bond so unbreakable. Additionally, the sense of sameness I experience with my mom through the sport is something valuable to me. Hearing my mom talk about running in a buoyant manner was something that perplexed me. Perhaps because she was an incredibly admirable runner with insanely fast times and school records, I believed running was something people only enjoyed when they were applaudable at it. However, discovering my own story through running and experiencing life with it in the forefront allowed me to realize this is surely not the case.

Now, with a commendable amount of time off of my races, a substantial increase in mileage, a bid to the Florida state competition, multiple school records, and a new love for running, it seems as though it's something I can't live without. Running is something I forever want to impact my life, through college, through occupation, through parenthood, through everything. Here's to many more "sorry I can't's and "she's always running", because regardless of what opportunities I reject or activities I can't partake in, running will always remain a necessity to my livelihood. I suppose a passion, or simply an extracurricular can supply you with a lot more than a past time. Regardless of how my athletic career develops at a collegiate level, I can speak with certainty that the

lessons inflicted on my being through the sport such as perseverance, effort, and patience in noticeable improvement will carry me through a successful academic career. Running has taught me that being an active, and healthy version of yourself is fulfilling; I desire to aid individuals in achieving this through studying in the biological and medical field, eventually holding an occupation that nourishes and sustains those in society.

What does running mean to me?

By Joslyn Rill



After having never done a team sport in my life, I started running track and field in sixth grade. It started as a way to hang out with friends until I found a love for hurdles and started becoming competitive with myself. When high school began, running started to take over my life. Practicing six days a week for multiple hours meant that I gave up other opportunities for running. At first, this was hard for me to deal with until I found my drive to push myself. At the end of my freshman year, I dropped three minutes in one race and started to see my own potential. Sophomore year, I attempted to be a part of the “400-mile club” over the summer and got injured twice in the process. I persevered and kept pushing and by junior year I had dropped another minute in the 5k.

My senior year, I embodied dedication to the team. I ran the most mileage, recovered properly, and tried to manage my stress levels. I finally learned how to show up and trust the process. Not only did this apply to running, but it applied to my job, my education, and my dreams. I have realized what things I can control, and what I need to let play out because it is out of my control. During the summer, I finally was a part of the “400-mile club” which meant that I was committed to running 400 miles throughout the summer. To achieve this, I ran before work, at practice, and even at work with my friend. Running alone made me extremely disciplined, but when running with friends the time always flew by.

Cross country season was monumental for me this year. Though I never broke my personal record, I continually pushed myself and grew as a leader during the season. I chose to lead by example, showing my younger teammates that running can be enjoyable, but it takes consistent effort. I am grateful for my coaches who always saw my effort and rewarded me by giving me many opportunities to improve and race varsity. Each practice that I finished the workout was another step towards my goal. I realized through running that confidence is built by following through with the promises that I make to myself.

After crossing the finish line of my season, I decided to pursue longer races because my intuition was telling me that this is what I was meant to do. I started training for the Thanksgiving Half Marathon as soon as we got back from the cross-country state meet. Using my knowledge of training plans, I designed my own plan in order to keep me accountable with my runs and guide further improvements. My original goal was to get under two hours. With this in mind, I scheduled another half marathon in February that I planned to thoroughly train for and improve upon my first time. In my first half, I ended up surprising myself and got 1:49:18. I was very proud of myself, which fueled the training for the next half. During these few months, I solely relied on myself to get on the road and run. My family did not understand the high that I get from accomplishing my goals. In February, I ended up improving my time by over 2 minutes.

Moving forward into college, running will serve as my therapy. I love using it to clear my head or develop a new friendship by running with someone else. I will forever attribute my positive attitude and goals of self-improvement to running. The path ahead may be unclear, but I'll just keep running.

Striders Scholarship Essay

By Reese Henley



“Slow down!” “What are you saying?” “Is she speaking gibberish?” These are all the things I hear every day. When you think about someone facing an obstacle in their life, you tend to think of an event, a time, or a person that affected them. However, my obstacle was myself. More specifically, my speech.

Between my fifth and sixth grade year, my family moved, and I now had to enter the most awkward stages of my life with no friends and a fear of speaking. For all middle school, I rarely tried to reach out to anyone. I was scared that if I did, they would turn me away or think I was weird for stuttering or talking too fast. When I did try, the typical reaction was narrowed eyes, furrowed eyebrows, and the words “you talk so fast, I can’t understand you.” Speaking in front of the class was always a nightmare. My name would get called, and as I walked to the front of the room, I would hear kids whisper “this won’t end well,” or “she needs a translator.” As the mocking continued, I began to struggle with anxiety. Speaking became my biggest insecurity.

Finally, I started speech therapy. In eighth grade I was put in a group where we would play games and practice strategies together. I started to enjoy it. However, entering high school, I felt isolated. My weekly meetings pulled me out of class and put me in a closet-sized room. Sessions were either one on one or grouped with the ESE students. We played games meant for kids learning how to read, or even had to read aloud children’s books. It made me feel stupid, and that I was not as mentally mature as my peers. It almost made me feel like my teachers even looked down on me for having an impediment. Whenever I had problems in a class, I was scared to ask for help. Whenever I did it usually ended in me breaking down in tears. Most teachers would not even accommodate me or go to my meetings with my parents and therapist, which were required.

I never wanted to be seen as different, but I at least wanted them to understand the extra measures I must take daily. Something in me changed in February of my

sophomore year. It was my second year on varsity track, and I started making a name for myself. My time was dropping, and I started gaining respect from my teammates. I made new friends on the team and was finally being seen as fast in a new way. Running, not talking. I gained this newfound confidence that I carried over into junior year. I started running cross country and immediately became a top runner on the team, which led to me becoming captain my senior year. That year I also had the idea to run for student government. Past me would have never even considered running for office. But this got me out of my shell. I won the election for student body treasurer my junior and senior year. Making me the only person from my class ever to be reelected. Representing my class and having a voice for all the kids in my grade gave me a different perspective. I chose to put their problems before mine. Which meant public speaking became a regular task. But it was much easier knowing I had over eight hundred people wanting me to speak for them.

2024 FSTC College Scholarship



The Florida Striders Track Club would like to inform you of our annual college scholarship program and appreciate your help in distributing this information to your students. This year, five (5) \$1,000 college scholarships will be awarded to graduating high school seniors who live in Northeast Florida. The 2024 Florida Striders Track Club College Scholarship application is available on our website at www.floridastriders.com and can be downloaded as a Word document. The deadline for applications is March 29, 2024.

Thank you very much for your time and assistance. If you have any questions, I can be reached by e-mail at kimberly.lundy@myoneclay.net or on my cell at #904-307-9234.

Sincerely,

Kim Lundy

Chairperson, FSTC Scholarship Committee

Click here to apply: [Florida Striders Scholarship Application](#)

2023 FSTC College Scholarship Past Recipients:2023

Keegan Emanuel	Fleming Island High School
Reese Henley	Bartram Trail High School
Katherine McCoy	Stanton College Preparatory School
Joslyn Rill	Bishop Kenny High School
Joseph Salazar	Ridgeview High School
Katelyn Thompson	Fleming Island High School

2022

Grace Adams	Fleming Island High School
Kaitlyn Frost	Bishop Snyder High School
Annie Loehle	Mandarin High School
Jessica Malosh	Stanton College Preparatory School
Audrey Singletary	Nease High School
Matthew Stratton	St. Johns Country Day School

2021

Anna Albertelli	Bishop Kenny High School
Gabriella Berardi	Ponte Vedra High School
Lucas Bouquot	Ponte Vedra High School
Emma Millson	Fleming Island High School
Rhiannon O'Donnell	Fletcher High School

2020

Jessica Fliess	Fleming Island High School
Katherine Harland	Home Schooled, Mandarin High School
William Livesay	Fleming Island High School
Craig McFarland	Stanton College Preparatory School
John Wright Stanly	Stanton College Preparatory School
Lauren Wilkerson	Paxon School for Advanced Studies

2019

John Bear	Orange Park High School
Alaina Carpenter	Creekside High School
Logan Chastain	Mandarin High School
Ben Gelok	Fleming Island High School

2018

Danielle Corbin	Episcopal School of Jacksonville
Logan Faulkner	Bishop Kenny High School
Sydney Nelson	Fleming Island High School
Sean Snyder	St. Joseph Academy

2024 Resolution Fun Run Recipients

Presenting Fun Run checks to all the winning Run/Walk Club Programs. There are 10 schools who shared the \$1800 that was sponsored by Best Bet.



Annunciation Becky Carreon



Coppergate Traci Conroy



Lakeside Arinton Powell



Montclair Darryl Herren



Oakleaf Village Dawn Brancaccio and Alan Brown



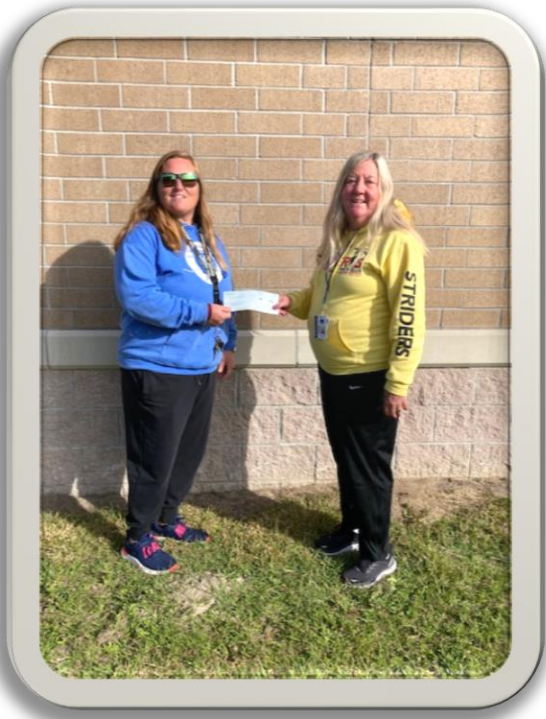
Orange Park Bonny Lawrence



Paterson Rene Vann



St. Johns Classical Academy
Beth Moody



Swimming Pen Creek
Michelle Bravo



Thunderbolt
Annette Gray and Crystal Zaragosa

The Run for the Fallen By Regina Soeey

"Running Changes Everything," was a Marathon High slogan one season and one of my favorite quotes ever. For me this is a true statement, and I am sure that is the case for many of us runners. I was not the same happy-go-lucky, confident, positive person you all know and (sometimes) love before I discovered running in 2001. I wasn't happy with my job, my family, my friends, myself, or my life. I decided to do the Gate River Run in 2001, and after 3 months of completely uninformed training, I purchased a matchy outfit and was surprised to find myself up there with all the "real" runners. I was even more surprised to win the then Top 10% medal at the end of the race (before there were hats and before the men and women were separate). That medal had a profound effect on me and my life. I hadn't been awarded anything at all since I had graduated from law school in 1996, and I hadn't considered myself good or successful at anything as I struggled to find myself and my tribe. I was actually decent at running and this might be a place where I could be accepted just as I am.



The rest is history.....a happy career change to real estate, 75 marathons, many ultras, and countless training miles later.....I am a completely different person. The running community accepts me for who I am.....loud, unfiltered, passionate, loyal, reliable, fun loving, kind, empathetic, generous.....the good the bad and the weird. Most importantly, I accept myself, and even often love myself, although that is a work in progress.

Once I got my new career, new friends and new outlook on life established, I started to look outside myself for a bigger purpose. I realized that running is the perfect platform to give back to others, and to champion causes. Nothing has given me more joy than looking for ways to give back through running over the past several years.

The Run for the Fallen 2024.....3 days.....12 runners.....170 miles.....over 1185 heroes.....Tallahassee to Jacksonville.....

My latest endeavor was participating in the 4th Annual Florida Run for the Fallen with an amazing group of runners and volunteers, many of whom are veterans or active-duty military or reservists. I was excited about bonding with this amazing group of people over 3 days of difficult running carrying flags and recognizing Florida's fallen military heroes. However, I had no idea the effect this event would have on others and on me.

Growing up near Mayport NS, I had many classmates with military parents, so I had a normal amount of respect and patriotic spirit towards our military. This spirit was diluted through years of college, working, and questioning whether our country and system of governing was really the best there is. In the past several years, with everything going on in the world, my love for my country has grown, and I have spent more time traveling here, and connecting with my friends all over the



country. Running across Tennessee twice as part of the Vol State Road Race, I met amazing people from small towns who gave so much of themselves to take care of us journey runners and recognize our adventurous (and crazy) goals.

The Run for the Fallen started at the State Capitol in Tallahassee with a flag ceremony where we recognized a Gold Star Family, a family who has lost someone during or as a result of military service. As the sun rose on the horizon in front of us, we started running East on Hwy 90 towards Jacksonville. We stopped every mile, a total of 147 hero markers, and read aloud the names of several fallen heroes. As we read the names we held a small flag up in recognition, and we raised the flags in a salute at the end of each list. At many of the mile markers there was anywhere from one to four families. After we read the name of their lost loved one, we presented each with a flower and small flag, and each of us hugged them and expressed sympathy for their sacrifice. There were a lot of tears at each stop.



As we ran through various towns and counties, the local law enforcement guided our journey and kept our caravan safe and visible on the road. We had an amazing group of Veteran motorcycle riders accompany us for the entire journey. We enjoyed meals provided to us by local American Legion and VFW units. Everyone on the roads of each town greeted us with cheers and clapping.

As the miles ticked by, my body grew more weary, but my patriotic spirit for the USA grew stronger with every step and every embrace. I know without a doubt, that we live in the best country in the entire world, and that the freedom and amazing lifestyle we all enjoy is not free.

Our journey ended at the Veterans Memorial Wall in downtown Jacksonville with a poignant closing ceremony. George Lutz, the founder of the Run for the Fallen, spoke about how he started this quest after losing his son and seeking a meaningful way to recognize his sacrifice and make sure the names of fallen heroes are never forgotten. We presented Honor and Remember flags to many families along the way, and at the end. A group of drums and bagpipes played patriotic songs as the entire crowd was captivated and full of emotions.



I ran 49 miles over those three days. This seems like a lot of miles and a lot of wear and tear, but my contribution is so small compared with the price paid by the families we met along the way and compared with the daily work and sacrifices made by the members of our military and their families. I am forever grateful to have been born in the USA and I am Proud to be an American!!!!

Striders Volunteers

Thank you to our Strider volunteers, Jakob Irwin, Joni Neidigh, Jack Frost, David Allen, (not in pictures) Bryan Boyer, Jennifer Szala and Mike Tibble, who volunteered their time during the JV Track Meet held at Orange Park High School on February 21, 2024.



Jakob Irwin

We love
♥ OUR ♥
Volunteers



Jack Frost, Jonie Neidigh
with David Allen



Eagles Fly 5k/Maddi's Mile

Many of the Florida Striders supported the Eagles Fly 5k/Maddi's Mile at Fleming Island High School and several won awards.





Strider Resolution Run Winner



Resolution Run was the first race of our new Championship Series that was held on January 6, 2024. Male Winner was Josue Velazquez with a chip time of 18:27 and Female Winner was Michelle Krueger with a chip time of 19:50.

Congratulations Josue and Michelle!

Upcoming Race



Run To The Sun 5K
Saturday, April 20, 2024
8:00 am
Bestbet Orange Park Kennel Club
455 Park Avenue, Orange Park,
FL 32067 United States

Click [here](#) to sign up

