

# AMAZING RUNNING TRANSFORMATIONS

While many runners seem born to run, for others it takes guts to get out there and give it a try. These amazing people took the chance on making their lives better. They took a risk, reached out to a community that was foreign and made the life changing choice to take action, and live healthy! We honor their courage and congratulate them on their great success!



## I ran it off!

### Jennifer Nilson

I've been running since August of 2006. It was quite by accident that I started running and never in a million years did I believe that I could actually enjoy this activity. What a bizarre concept. After all, I am the person who always questioned the sanity of these people (runners) who were always in such a hurry to go nowhere.

I found myself complaining to a friend about how diets don't work for me, and I know all the excuses that overweight people use! He's a runner, so of course, within minutes he emailed me my workout schedule. This was NOT what I had in mind! I can't run! I'm fat. I can't run. Period. People will laugh at me. I can run from the car to the house in pouring rain, but that's it. Bottom line...I can't do this.

Well, you guessed it. I did it. With my youngest daughter off to college and no one home but the dogs and me, I had run out of excuses. After a few weeks, my 6-day-a-week schedule was getting easy, so we adjusted it to make it a little more challenging. I'll never forget the day I ran a WHOLE mile without walking! It's funny to look back at that knowing now that that first mile is only my warm-up. From the start, I cut out the junk food from my diet - and absolutely nothing deep fried - and concentrated on healthy choices. Slowly, but surely, I realized I was becoming addicted to running. The weight was starting to come off and I was having a great time in the process. I often wonder if my friend misses my complaining.



We're all runners in the RRR world, so I don't have to tell you how great I feel. I only compete against myself and I always win. I've got a few 5K bibs now and even participated in the conception of what is now the annual Haley Rath Memorial 5K in Beloit. The highlight of my running career to this day was the Marine Corps Marathon 10K, October 28, 2007. I flew to Washington, DC and ran the event with my brother, Skip, who is a Lt. Col. He could have finished the race in well under an hour, but he stayed with me the whole way and it was so much fun! When I told my 83-year-old mother about the race (she is in denial that I am a runner) she asked, "6.2 miles? All at once?"

I have an online t-shirt quilting business in Roscoe ([www.wildzipper.com](http://www.wildzipper.com)), and over the years I've made hundreds of running quilts. Each shirt has a story behind it, and each quilt has a runner to tell that story. I'm starting to really understand how much those shirts mean to us, and why people want to memorialize them in the form of a quilt. I've lost 65 lbs so far and I'm still a work in progress. Although I'll probably always be a 'Clydesdale,' I find the running community very supportive and I don't recall ever being laughed at! I still would rather run alone than with a buddy, but with the right person, I'm open to trying that again.

So much more to look forward to! If all goes as planned I'll be running the Rockford Half Marathon on May 18. Maybe...just maybe...the Marine Corps Marathon next October. Time will tell. In the meantime, if you see me on the Stone Bridge Trail in Roscoe, say hi!

## Inspired by Community

### Deb Hayes

Seven years ago I joined the Y. My son Joshua was just 2 years old at the time and a total whirlwind of energy. Let me emphasize that again - a total whirlwind. At that time, my husband worked two very time consuming jobs and I realized that I needed help. I had been battling the smoking habit on and off for years, and I needed a new way to cope with these issues.

Donna, who managed the daycare department at the Y, was my first true contact. She listened and empathized with my many parenting complaints, and she truly helped me calm my over stretched nerves. When her management duties changed and most of her time was spent in the administration offices upstairs, both Mary and Vivian became my parenting support system. I will always appreciate and value their ability to listen to members.

Once the Y became a stable source of consistent support, I was able to reach out and expand my health and fitness boundaries. Lynne Istad became my Fit Start Coach. Cathy Stewart and Lynne introduced me to the "Women on Weights" class led by Kelli Haberdank. As time went by, Belinda, Sally, Wally, Ann, Dorothy, Charles, Randy, Maria, TC, Darcy, and many others shared their time and friendship. The Y truly became my "second family."

On 11/22/2002 Sean Morgan Hayes was born at Swedish American Hospital. The smoking habit reared it's ugly head 6 months thereafter. Sean was suffering from food allergies and I was suffering from "let's blame everything on myself." You see, every time I fed him, he became ill. Frustrated, I reached out by studying nutrition. I became an avid fan of Dr. Peter Ddamo's website, and slowly got back into exercising at the Y. I watched hours and hours of the "cooking channel" and researched as many 'food allergy' cooking books as I could get my hands on. I knew that if I didn't get a handle on things, Sean would end up in the hospital.



Both the Y and Dr. Ddamo's website were a big source of support. Eventually, Sean was diagnosed with potential Celiac Disease or at the very least "gluten and lactose" intolerance. Once I mastered cooking without wheat and without cow's milk, Sean's health improved as well as my own state of mind.

Now that Sean's issues were addressed, I was able to reach out once again, and improve upon my own fitness level. Jarod S. and Mike D. helped me study for my personal training certification. Cathy Stewart introduced me to the rowdy crowd who 'hung out' at the stretching mats. I will never forget the laughter and the insane amount of good natured teasing. Jeff W., Chris O., Carol, Pat, Dave, Brian M., and many others inspired me to run and challenge myself. Brian Ffaasst, Jimejo, Don from the 5:30 running group, Ed Clucas, "Uncle Larry" -- there are just so many! Running is such a wonderful group sport, that I seriously doubt that I will ever quit.

And cigarettes? Forget it. Nothing will ever beat the high that comes after running for a solid hour through the trails of Rock Cut State Park. Hey Ed, I still owe you breakfast!

*Deb, otherwise known as "Tarzanna" Hayes*



## Finding Personal Motivation

### Todd Enneking

I have been running since shortly after I turned 30. I am now 47. I first started running with a friend, Jim Wilt, as part of Corporate Cup. We were just casual runners, but that really helped my attitude and weight. When Jim left town (for Rockford Michigan), my running dropped off.



I then found a new running partner in a neighbor and great local runner, Tom Wilcox, who really helped me push myself. With Tom's mentoring and encouragement I was able to run the Chicago Marathon two years in a row. Shortly after that I had some injuries, and Tom moved out of my neighborhood. My running dropped off again. This time I definitely put on weight and was a bit discouraged.

However, after some soul searching I got back into my running more seriously. I have found the personal motivation to push myself with my running, do some other exercises,

and significantly improve my eating habits. In the last few years I have lost over 25 pounds and lowered my blood pressure (from 170/100 to 115/75). I feel great, especially since running has also helped me better manage the stress in my life. Running is such a great release from the troubles of the day/week. I plan on continuing for many more years to come.

## A Lifestyle Adjustment

### Jim Simmons

Some of you who read this might find what I say hard to believe, others either know someone or have themselves been completely changed by a lifestyle adjustment as an adult.



Exercise and Running is the adjustment I have made. For those who don't know me see the enclosed pictures or ask a Road Runner. Let me start by saying that exactly one year ago I was 80 pounds heavier than I am now. I didn't even think of running, or any other type of exercise. But I was tired of being tired and having achy breaky parts. My back, legs, feet and knees were always sore and tired. I decided it was time to do something. I had a physical about six months before this when I wasn't at full fighting weight and didn't feel so bad. Let me share some of what the report said.



My cholesterol was 232, LDL - 165, HDL - 40, TRIG. - 124, PSA - 1.0, and I weighed 242 lbs.

Flash to the present after starting to run in June as a RRR.

My latest physical reports: My cholesterol is 141, LDL - 86, HDL - 46, TRIG. - 38, PSA - 0.4, and I weighed 166 lbs.

I feel physically like a new person. I can do anything. Nothing is too challenging. My life is filled with energy, optimism, new friends, and for the first time in my adult life...I have a hobby, and I love it. I now run and exercise regularly. My kids (18 & 21) are so surprised and elated that "the old man" has a hobby, and is into all

this exercise stuff. It's not that I have nothing else to do. In fact my life has always been busy with family and church related activities on top of my sometimes hectic work schedule. But I found time to run every circuit race I could in 2007. I plan on doing it again this year. It is so fun and rewarding to participate and to volunteer. I have not met a grouchy runner yet. My plans for the future include doing the 2 half marathons in Rockford this May, (*editors note: Jim ran a 1:30:44 at the Rockford Half Marathon*) adding more bicycling to my routine, looking into a Triathlon with a team, and ultimately a marathon for next year. What a difference 1 year, fresh air, exercise, and a great group of running enthusiasts can make. I truly wish to thank ALL of you RRR's who have been so positive and friendly, and encouraging. You had a great deal to do with my transformation even when you didn't know about it.