

Twenty-Six Two Member Profiles

August 2011

In this edition of the monthly TST member profiles, we spotlight members **Amber Jennings** and **Kate McLaughlin**. **Amber** was part of the 2010-11 first-time women's group that trained for the Livestrong Armstrong Marathon just a few months ago. She is now training for her second marathon later this year. **Kate** is a former Twenty-Six Two board member, and has run a number of marathons around the country, including as a pacer for the Austin Marathon.

Former First-Timer: Amber Jennings



Amber and daughter Lainey

Amber at San Antonio RNR Half

My husband and I have lived in Austin for a little over 5 years. In January 2010, I began running for the first time in about 10 years after being asked by some co-workers to train for the Texas Roundup 10K. When I first started training, I couldn't even run the 3 mile loop at the trail! After I completed my 10K, I was addicted and went on to look for a group to run with. I found TST through a co-worker in May. I contacted TST Coach Paul Carmona and told him I was really interested in running a half-marathon. He told me to come on out, and I have been running with the group since. I signed up for the Rock 'N' Roll San Antonio half-marathon in June and at that time, Paul encouraged me to sign up for the first-time marathon group. I never thought I could complete a FULL marathon, but with some encouragement from Paul and some of the other TST members, I applied. It was by far one of the best decisions I have ever made. Since I started running with TST, I have completed 4 half-marathons and my first full marathon. I am currently training for a half-marathon in October and a full-marathon in December.

In addition to my love for running, I have a greater love for my family -- my husband John, daughter Lainey, and my two furry children Tucker and Gracie. John and Lainey are at most every race and meet me at the finish line every time. The best part of the Austin Marathon was seeing my little girl's excitement when she saw me coming. She kept saying "There's mommy!! There's mommy!!". I know that my running impacts my daughter in a positive way. She already has a pair of "running shoes" and shows me how fast they make her run.

Running makes me happy and keeps me healthy, physically and mentally. People always tell me how crazy I am. I always tell them to watch out -- there are lots of crazies running around Austin!!

Veteran Member: Kate McLaughlin



Kate at Falmouth 2011

Making 7:35 pace look easy

Kate's Storied Running (and other sports) History

I started running to build endurance for Ultimate, a field sport much like soccer, but played with a frisbee. I played Ultimate in college and spent several years after college playing at the club level, traveling all over the country and even to Europe to play with a nationally ranked women's team in Boston. Then I retired from Ultimate and took up mountain biking, but I wrecked too often. Running looked safer, so I started running after I moved to Austin from Boston 20 years ago.

I ran my first marathon in San Antonio in '95. Then I ran Austin and Boston in '96. I quit running for a while, but then lost my job and took up running again. In '02 I ran Austin again and also ran Cape Cod, attempting a sub-3:30 New York City Marathon time qualifier...but missed. Then in '03 I ran Austin and missed again, and ran the Clarence DeMar Marathon in southern New Hampshire and missed. Again. I ran Austin again in '04 and hit my PR and – finally – that NYC time qualifier!

Got a job. Red Sox win first World Series in 86 years! Ran New York City Marathon. Ran Austin again in '05. Struggled with running for a while, and then ran San Diego in '06 with Twenty-Six Two, then Dallas. Paced Austin in '07. Jogged Boston in '07 (should have skipped that one). Sox win again in 2007! Ran Dallas again in '07. Paced Austin again in '08. Tried some big girl miles with Team Rogue then choked at California International in '08. Paced Austin again in '09. Ran Dallas again in '09 and paced Austin again in '10. This is beginning to sound like a broken record. "Steady Eddie", that's what one of my coaches calls me.

I ran the Grand Canyon in May '10 and inflicted nearly permanent damage. Turned 50. Currently struggling to regain overall motivation; it looks like training for Tucson '11 with my Twenty-Six Two family might just be the ticket. And '11 is looking like it will be another championship year for my Red Sox! All totaled, I've run San Antonio, Austin (9x), Boston (2x), Cape Cod, New York City, Clarence DeMar, San Diego, Sacramento, and Dallas (3x). That puts me at 20 marathons, and I'm back training with Twenty-Six Two again for my 21st at Tucson in December.