

MISSISSAUGA MARATHON.COM 15 Years Running

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 12, 2018

MISSISSAUGA MARATHON A FAMILY AFFAIR FOR THE SCHWASS'



Photo provided by Kirstin Schwass. (L-R: Rebecca (Rooke) Schwass, Richard Schwass, Nicholas Schwass, Kirstin Schwass, Erika Schwass, Josh Thomas

Mississauga, ON – Kirstin Schwass grew up in Streetsville with an active family. Her mother constantly reminded Kirstin and her siblings that, “Exercise is beneficial,” whether it was skiing, canoeing, biking or running. Although Kirstin never considered herself a “runner,” she was inspired by her husband, Rick, who was training for his first marathon, soon after they met in high school.

After moving to Caledon to raise three children, Kirstin and Rick remained active, ultimately getting their children involved as well. When the kids played baseball in the neighbouring town, either Kirstin or Rick would drive one way while the other ran the 5 kilometre trip to the baseball diamond, switching on the way home. Their sons both expressed an interest in running home one day and thus the desire to continue running was born.

While the Schwass family regularly engaged in physical activity, Kirstin, then a physical education teacher at Morton Way Public School in Brampton, noticed that students were being driven to school every day, even if they were within walking distance! She began a walk-to-school program to encourage students and parents to get active, and even began training to run the 21.5 kilometres to school herself! Kirstin and her son, Nicholas, who was 12 years old at the time, trained all summer leading up to International Walk to School Day on October 3rd – the day after Nicholas’ 13th birthday! The journey took two hours, but both Kirstin and Nicholas achieved their goal, and decided to sign up for the Toronto Half Marathon the following year. In 2005, both completed their first Mississauga Half Marathon, with Kirstin completing the event 12 times and Nicholas ten times. In 2017, Nicholas achieved a personal best time of 1:14:02.

In 2007, Rick challenged Kirstin to run a Full Marathon, to which she replied, “I will if you do.” They trained together and both qualified for the Boston Marathon, running it three years in a row. The next step was to have one of their children qualify for Boston, which Nicholas did in 2010. All three Schwass’ completed the Boston Marathon together, but Mississauga remains one of their favourite races. “We would occasionally drive down to Port Credit in the evening and get ice cream. It is a pretty course and it is a fast course. In fact, both Rick and I got our [personal bests] on the Mississauga Marathon course,” says Kirstin.

Kirstin is now a physical education teacher at SouthFields Village Public School in Caledon, where staff believe in the importance of giving children the opportunity to participate in sports, intramurals and exercise. SouthFields Village students participate in the Mississauga Marathon’s MaraFun Program, where they complete 40 kilometres of physical activity in the six weeks leading up to the Mississauga Marathon on May 6th. They complete the final 2 kilometres on the Full Marathon course, ultimately completing a marathon distance of 42.2 kilometres! Students and even teachers take part in training at school, running with their friends and classmates. Kirstin says, “It all creates a positive atmosphere. Students get excited as they find they can run farther and farther without taking walk breaks, and they learn to challenge themselves and set new goals.” On the Monday morning following the Mississauga Marathon, all students bring their t-shirts and medals to school to proudly display and celebrate their hard work! On the importance of children being active at an early age, Kirstin says, “physically literate children will have the confidence and competence to engage in a variety of activities and will be most likely to continue to be physically active throughout their lives.”

When asked about her favourite family memory at the Mississauga Marathon, Kirstin recalls her daughter, Erika, running her first Half Marathon at Mississauga in 2017. “Growing up, our daughter, Erika, wasn’t very interested in running, though she would occasionally ride her bike to carry my water

for me on my long runs. After the university rowing season ended, she independently began running and training [and] she told me she was interested in running a half marathon,” says Kirstin. Five members of the Schwass family, in addition to Erika’s boyfriend, ran the Mississauga Half Marathon in 2017. “That was a special day!” recalls Kirstin. “Looking back, we can say that a Schwass family member has completed the Mississauga Half or Full Marathon a total of 36 times!”

Looking ahead to 2018’s Mississauga Marathon, Kirstin looks forward to running again with her family and the household buzz the morning of the race. “It is wonderful to be able to participate in a sporting event with my husband, my children and their significant others. It is the greatest feeling ever!”

About the Mississauga Marathon

The 2018 Mississauga Marathon is scheduled to take place from Friday, May 4 to Sunday, May 6, 2018. Race Weekend will include a Health & Wellness Expo that is open to the general public at Port Credit Memorial Arena on Friday, May 4 and Saturday, May 5, 2018. The Mississauga Marathon will continue to offer “A Run for Everyone,” with events including the Full Marathon, Pandora Square One Half Marathon, Full Marathon Relay Challenge, MNP 10KM, 10KM Student Relay, Novo Nordisk® “Hazel” 5KM and Timbits 2KM Fun Run/Walk. Participants may register online at www.mississaugamarathon.com.

-30-

Contact:

Jenna Brown
Marketing and Communications Coordinator
905-949-1910 x222
jbrown@landmarksport.com