

ARKANSAS RUNNER INTERVIEW

Tara Begoon, Vice-president 2016 –

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AR: Tell us about yourself and your family.

Tara: I'm from right here in Bryant! I attended Bryant High School and then went to college at UALR where I switched majors from pre-med to pre-pharmacy to education. 7 years of college later I finally graduated!

I work at Hill Farm Elementary (in Bryant) and I've been there for 2 years. Hill Farm is the BEST! Prior to that I worked at an elementary in Little Rock School District and before that I worked in pharmacy.

My husband Hunter works for the Benton Police Department and we have a pretty awesome kid named Easton who is 6. Polly is family member #3. She's a sweet rescue dog that is 2 years old. One cool fact is I was a huge band nerd (still am). I play the flute and am pretty darn good at it if I do say so myself. It's a great stress reliever (much like running) and is a great way to express yourself.

AR: How long have you been running and what got you started?

Tara: I've only been running since 2013. I started with the WRA clinic that Spring. My son's cancer treatments slowed down by that time and I really needed to get out of the house and focus on myself a little. I met some amazing friends at that clinic and I haven't stopped since then!

AR: What is a typical running week for you?

Tara: I usually run 3-4 days per week. Mileage varies depending on what I'm training for. I enjoy running with my friends, but my husband's schedule often requires me to squeeze in solo runs when I'm able.

AR: Do you do any cross training, biking, weights, etc.? If so, what sort and how often?

Tara: Cross training...do you mean keeping up with a 6 year old and 25 8 year olds every day? If so, then yes. But seriously I would like to do more serious cross training this year.

AR: Are you a member of any running club other than the Striders? If so, what club?

Tara: Nope! Just a Strider!

AR: Favorite place to run? Where/why?

Tara: I really love running on the River Trail in Little Rock. It's so pretty and relaxing. I'm not very picky though. I can be convinced to run anywhere.

AR: How about training partners? Do you have any or do you train alone?

Tara: Oh yes. Jayme and I have put in lots of miles together as she's convinced me to join her on the marathon shenanigans. I've also ran quite a bit with Carla, Sassy, Krista, Julie, and so many more people!

AR: How long have you been racing?

Tara: My first race was the WRA 5k in 2013. That year I did several races and my first half marathon in San Francisco. I've been able to see a lot of Arkansas and several other states by traveling for races with friends.

AR: You completed all the races in the 2015 Grand Prix Series and earned Iron status. What prompted you to undertake this effort?

Tara: Possibly insanity? Or a weak moment? I think it's a pretty awesome accomplishment to dedicate yourself to. Lots of friends were doing it and...well...I gave in to peer pressure. I sure am glad I did! I did several races under the weather, one of which I was very very sick. It taught me to just not give up and that in the end it's totally worth it.

AR: How well have you recovered from it?

Tara: Ehhh. I think between Grand Prix races and 7 marathons in a year I needed a break. I took January off and have slowly gotten back in to it. I've really missed running long distance and everything so I'm ready to get back to it!

AR: If you had it to do over again, would you do it?

Tara: Absolutely! I really had fun doing the races and spending time with friends. (Just not this year...or probably next)

AR: Have you done any races this year?

Tara: 2016...very few. I did the New Years Day Double Double. Since then I've only done the hour track run and the River Trail 15k. I'm pretty sure that's it.

AR: Do you have a favorite racing distance? If so, what?

Tara: I really do love marathons...unless it's raining and my hair is wet. It really pushes you physically and mentally.

AR: What have been your favorite races?

Tara: Nike Women's Half (because it was my first), MidSouth Marathon (also because it was my first), Chicago Half, Route 66 was pretty neat, and 3B26 for sure. I also love the River Trail 15k. Heck...I love most all of the races I've done actually.

AR: What has been your longest racing distance?

Tara: The shortest Ultra Marathon at Route 66 when we did the Center of the Universe Detour. Yeah, I know...doesn't really count but.....

AR: What are your PR's at various distances?

Tara: 5k is 27 something. Marathon is like 5:15ish. I guess I should care more about keeping up with specific times.

AR: Most memorable race? Explain.

Tara: I really liked Team Loco Marathon because that's where I became a Marathon Maniac. That was a good and happy time. Route 66 was very

memorable for a different reason. I was NOT having a good day and it seemed everything was going wrong. In the middle of a mental fit being thrown I was walking during the race and thinking about how much I hated everything about running. Then I hear "you better get your ass to running" from behind me. I turn around and it's a guy no less than 80 years old having the time of his life. He quite frankly told me I was too young to be walking! I then had no excuses. Maybe he made me a little mad in the moment, but he was so right. It was then that I got my mind right and started running again. He never caught back up with me, but I sure wish I would've waited at the finish line to tell that cranky old guy thank you.

AR: What have been some of your other most memorable events, moments, or achievements in running?

Tara: I was really happy to have earned the Iron runner award and I received 5th in my age group in Grand Prix last year. Probably one of the most memorable was having my son run in with me at 3B26 in 2015. I think he was happier than I was!

AR: Non-running achievement of which you are most proud?

Tara: I'm very proud to be a mom and a teacher. I think those two things mean more than any award, scholarship, or anything else I've ever received. It's a daily gift that really keeps me going! Seeing them learn something new and enjoy learning like I do means a lot.

AR: How about shoes? Do you have a particular favorite?

Tara: Oh yes. Brooks Glycerin 12 Model...ya know, the one they discontinued and replaced with a less than awesome model. But no hard feelings here!

AR: How about significant injuries? Have you had any?

Tara: Ehh. Not horrible. Had a stress fracture in my foot that required me to be off for 6 weeks. Then just normal aches and pains every once in a while. I've been very lucky.

AR: Are there any runners you particularly admire or respect, or perhaps who have helped you in some way? Explain.

Tara: I think all of my running friends have influenced me in a positive way. They each have such different things to offer. Whether it be more knowledgeable runners who give advice or just friends to talk to I appreciate all of those relationships.

AR: How about hobbies and activities other than running?

Tara: I love to read and go shopping. My son and his extracurricular activities keep me pretty busy when I'm not running so there's little time for much else. When I'm able I still play my flute alone and with other musicians.

AR: Favorite non-running spectator sport?

Tara: Ummm notta. I've never been interested in any sports. I couldn't play any of them if I had to. I do watch 6 year old baseball if that counts for anything.

AR: Favorite non-running leisure activity?

Tara: Reading and playing outside with my son. Pretty low key.

AR: Running goals for the current year? Long term?

Tara: I haven't set any goals for the year so far. I plan to do a couple full marathons again. But I really just want to enjoy running and spending time with friends. Long term goals are pretty simple. I want to just stick with it and improve my times for sure.

AR: Anything else you would like to say to your fellow Arkansas runners?

Tara: We have a pretty awesome running community. I love how welcoming everyone is to people of all paces and distances. That's pretty special and I think we need to just keep encouraging each other!