

3W Races is all about community---from the local race focus, to the Neighborhood Fun Runs, to the charity partners and even the 3W Ambassador Program. Being a part of this community has allowed me to grow as a runner in ways that I would have never thought possible!

When I started as an ambassador in 2013 I was a new runner and 5k's were my "specialty" as well as my only distance. My first year as an ambassador I increased my distance to 7.77K in the Erin Go Braugh race and found out weeks later that I was expecting my first child. I definitely let my running go while I was pregnant but decided to reapply as an ambassador for 2014.

I had planned to use running to get back into prepregnancy shape and it was at the 2014 Ambassador kickoff event that I started telling people that I wanted to run a half marathon in 2014. I was never an athlete growing up and remember, 5K's were my specialty so deciding to run a half marathon was a big step for me especially with a new baby at home.

As the year went on I found in James and Michelle and my fellow 3W Ambassadors a supportive and welcoming community on the race course and in my everyday life. I started running again in March and began to gradually increase my distances and decided it was time to push myself and I registered for my first half marathon. I shared my goal of running my half with many of the Ambassadors and was met with loving encouragement during 3W events and out and about on my long runs on the Big Dry Creek Trail.

One of the perks of being an Ambassador during my half training was getting to incorporate 3W timed, actual races on my area trails into my half marathon training plan. I ran the Erin Go Braugh just 7 weeks after my son was born and then participated in the Six Pack Series while gradually increasing my distances to a 5 miler and 2 10k's to help prepare myself for the big half marathon.

My initial goals for the half marathon included just finishing, finishing in under 3 hours and running the entire time (even if it was a slow jog!). I'm proud to say that I completed my first half marathon this October with a finish time 40 minutes faster than my initial goal! The 3W community was a part of my half marathon experience even on race day as I ran into a couple of my fellow Ambassadors and 3W racers on race day during my half marathon. It was empowering to run beside my fellow ambassadors that I look up to as great runners and athletes!

The 3W community is truly a family unlike no other. Many racers return to event after event and you begin to recognize your fellow runners participating in series events like the Prairie Dog and the Six Pack Series. Participating in these events not only allowed me to better myself as a runner but to also share in the accomplishments of those in the 3W Races community. Throughout my half marathon training I couldn't help be inspired by my fellow ambassadors and by those runners that come out to push themselves just a little bit further and a little bit harder at the next 3W race. I look forward to continuing my journey as a runner with 3W Races and am already planning to use the Winter Six Pack Series to work on improving my speed in 2015.

Thank you for allowing me to be a part of such a wonderful community James and Michelle!

- **Sarah Hudnall**

This is my second year as a 3W Races Ambassador. Last year was great, but this year has been truly AMAZING! It has felt like a family this year, and I felt like I made so many new friends because of this program! I have loved getting to know some more local businesses and many more runners. I have seen the races grow and am very proud to hear the great compliments from so many runners about how we run these races! I have heard compliments from new runners are all as those who run races all over the place. I am finding myself unwilling to run in some of the larger races that don't have the personal touch that James and Michelle make sure to put into 3W.

- **Joy Geltmacher**