

Stephen Dalton, Coach for Alex

I started coaching Alex with Kevin in 2010. My wife Danielle and I have been close friends with the Schneiders for years. Danielle worked with the twins in their home for the time they were 8 years old until they were 16, providing ABA therapy and subsequently speech therapy for Alex and Jamie. Our families have remained close since then. In fact, my children, Oscar and Amelia, love coming to races to cheer on Alex and Jamie with homemade signs.

After running the Blazing Trails 4-Autism Four Mile Race, which Robyn coordinates to raise money for the school Alex and Jamie attend, and the Hamptons Half marathon in 2010, Robyn asked me if I would coach Alex and run the Boston Marathon with him. Training for Boston with Alex and Kevin was such a rewarding experience. Over that time, the three of us became such a cohesive unit that running and training together for the future seemed like a natural progression.

Kevin and I coordinate the training, with a specific goal in mind, normally choosing our next race and then training with that race date and distance in mind. Whether it's a three-hour plus long-distance run or intense on-mile speed workouts, Alex is a serious athlete and almost always placing in the top three of his age group in the races he runs.

The beginning of the race is the most challenging when running together. The crowded starting line is typically filled with runners focused on getting out in front and getting a good start to their race. This can be distracting for Alex and it is the Coach's job to make sure he does not get jostled around or trips. Other responsibilities in general when running with Alex include, keeping him aware of his surroundings, such as avoiding large water puddles, ice patches, snow, etc.; being mindful of crowds on the course; and reminding him to watch where he is going.

Alex is a very talented runner with a seemingly unlimited resource of untapped potential. It is exciting and challenging to run with him and to help him reach his full potential.

Stephen has been running with Alex since 2010