

## **LATE BLOOMER**

(as written by a Mount Prospect Mom, May 2015)

Let's be honest, in your 40's things begin to change....skin feels different, wrinkles appear, it's harder to read the small print, parts start to ache a little more and when I simply look at food I gain weight, straight to my hips. Oh, and the daily drill of homework patrol gets really, really old. My strategy to deal with many of the above items was to get more serious about my physical fitness. I am a healthcare provider and know how important healthy foods and regular exercise are. However, being truthful again, there are plenty of not-so-healthy foods I enjoy and do not LOVE to exercise. I joined a couple different gyms over the last few years, jogged outside when the weather was nice, about 1.5 miles. I was a true "30 minute" exerciser. When my children reached middle school and ran on the cross country team, my eyes were opened to the rewards of running regularly and competing. I saw the personal accomplishments they made, getting faster, achieving longer distances and enjoying the team spirit. I loved attending the meets and cheering them on; my eyes misting as we cheered on the very last runner to cross the finish line, proud that they did it. I enjoyed running outside, but only when the weather was nice. In the winter, I would try to put some time in on the treadmill, but was easily bored.

When the inaugural Got2Run For Education event was announced four years ago I decided the kids and I would participate, and we registered for the 2.62 mile Micro-Marathon, my very first running event. Then I panicked—I was in my upper 40's--how was I going to accomplish this? Would I embarrass myself? Fortunately, the Got2Run "Couch-To-2.62" Training Program adapted from a Nike program worked well for me. It was very manageable to run for a certain number of minutes and know I would then get a break to walk. I like listening to music when I run, loud enough to mask the sound of my breathing. There is a website that lists songs by the pace of your mile, for example songs for a 12-minute mile, etc. Another thing I did to prepare was to look up the course of the race and walked it the day before so it would be familiar. My younger sister ran that first race with me. It was incredibly fun, great to see how many people of all ages came out to do the event. The volunteers and onlookers cheering us on provided a great boost to keep going and complete the race. My sister asked me to run a race in her hometown a few months later. Since then we have made it a tradition to sign up for a couple races a year together. The second year of Got2Run we tackled the 8K course and added on a 10K at a different event. I printed out the Got2Run "Couch-To-8K" to get ready and added songs to my iPod to make a longer playlist. (Well...asked my kids to add songs to my iPod!). The third year we did a 15K run in the late fall. This year the goal is a half marathon. I still have to talk myself into going outside to run some days, but in the end I always feel better when I'm done. It's a great way to work out my problems and worries, loosen up my joints, and catch a little sunshine. Running has made me stronger, happier and more confident.