

Volunteers

Volunteer Profile Erin Lyons, Sharon

In pursuit of a new challenge

Sprint triathlon organizer preparing for inaugural race

By ANNIE CARD
For the Monadnock
Ledger-Transcript

Some volunteers are joiners. They learn about a project or a cause, and they jump in to help out. Then there's Erin Lyons, who didn't even think about finding a cause. That's because she has always had one.

"I want everyone to feel connected, and know how amazing it is to really push yourself, challenge yourself to do something you've never done before."

In a nutshell, that's why hundreds of participants and spectators will be cheering each other on at the Monadnock Challenge Series Sprint Triathlon on Aug. 22 in Peterborough. Erin Lyons, 28, is the force behind it all.

Proceeds from this event and future Monadnock Challenge Series races will go to the Support4Sports Fund. The fund's mission is to offer fun, adventurous sporting events on a yearly basis. Funds will be distributed as "sports-ships" to children, adults and teams in the community. Lyons' goal is to provide opportunities in the field of recreation to those who lack the resources.

A lifelong athlete, Lyons is hard-pressed to pick one sport or activity as her favorite, though rock climbing is at the top of the list along with sky-diving, mountain biking and hiking.

Lyons, now of Sharon, grew up in Bennington with an older brother and five younger siblings. She was only 22 when her father Randall was killed in a car accident on Easter morning, 2004.

"My parents were great, and are the whole reason I love being active," she said. "We had weekends in the White Mountains and camping trips to Hermit Island in Maine. Hiking, my father would have a baby in a pack on his front and one on his back. We were always outside."

"So basically I grew up outside, hiking and playing and riding horses since before I can even remember how old I was. I rode horses all the time until I was about 14, and then soccer and friends took over."

After graduating from Conval High School in 2000, competitive soccer was behind her and Lyons began looking for new ways to challenge herself and help others do the same.



PHOTO BY ANNIE CARD

Erin Lyons stands in Cunningham Pond in Peterborough, the launch site of the Monadnock Challenge Triathlon. More than 100 participants have signed up to swim .4 miles, bike 12 miles and run a 5K on Aug. 22.

Less than a year past graduation, Lyons began her career in the fitness industry, joining the staff at Great Shapes, a now defunct fitness club in the Noone Falls building.

From there she was recruited by business owner Hunter Burgess to manage Performance Health and Fitness, the gym he opened in 2005. Lyons said, "I always had great bosses and learned so much from them. They've all helped me realize my goal of sharing what I love, and are really part of what's gotten me to this point."

"Hunter was behind the triathlon from the moment I presented it. His mother, Cynthia, has been a huge help too with all her connections and logistics expertise. So many people are helping to make this happen."

On top of her full-time job at the gym, Lyons has been working on the triathlon since early April — everything from state permits, approving the course with the Peterborough Police Department, getting the blessing and co-sponsorship of the Peterborough Rec. Department and signing

up racers. It's been more like a CEO job than a first-time volunteer effort. But that's how Lyons does things. Big.

For two years, Lyons was a full-time student while managing the gym full time. She got her associates degree in business management at Nashua Community College, with a concentration in health and nutrition sciences. Only after completing her degree, did she have time to train for her first triathlon. "Work was great, but I was bored on another level. I missed competitive sports, and although I was still working out, I needed more. I had to find something that would make me want to train."

In July 2007, Lyons completed her first Triathlon. "It made me feel so over the top. It's so intense. You finish one leg and you're so happy you're done with that, then you have to run or jump on a bike. It's like after each leg, you can't believe you just did what you did and still have more to do. It's not all muscle either. At each point you can't believe what your body just did and what your mind just did. It's the best, best feeling. And

you're doing it with all these other people and cheering each other on."

With a huge smile, looking out across Cunningham Pond, Lyons said, "I really just want everyone to have that feeling." Lyons knows the success of this event is critical to the future growth of MCS events and the Support4Sports fund. "The most important thing is that we have a safe event, and everyone has fun. Not just the participants, but all the volunteers and the spectators, too."

Having set a goal of 50 participants, Lyons is happy to report more than 100 racers are registered with 11 days left for those still mustering up the courage to take the plunge.

Sprint triathlons are the fastest growing race event in the nation. Lyons and her posse of supporters anticipate this to be the start of something very big for the Monadnock region, kicking off not just an annual triathlon, but a series of races throughout the year — all raising money for the Support4Sports fund and putting the region on the map even more solidly as an adventure and fitness mecca.

MORE TO DO

Volunteer: Organizers for the sprint triathlon are still looking for volunteers to help on the day of the event.

When: Scheduled for Aug. 22, the event begins at 9:30 a.m., but with three legs of the triathlon, including a .4-mile swim, a 12-mile bike ride and a 3.1-mile run, many helpers are needed to make sure everything goes smoothly.

What's needed: Volunteers to help with set-up/clean-up, the bike course, the running course, the transition areas, the finish area, parking and registration.

Who to call: For those interested, contact Meghan Creeley at 491-3383 or email monadnockchallenge@gmail.com.

BUSINESSES

Race organizer Erin Lyons is still looking for businesses to donate gift certificates, prizes, coupons or items for goodie bags given to racers. Contact Lyons at 721-9959, ejleo22@hotmail.com or www.perfhealth.com

TO RACE

Contact Lyons at the number and addresses above.

Help Out

WHAT'S NEEDED

Assisted Living Assistance, Peterborough
The Scott-Farrar Home. Volunteers wanted for gardening, reading, crafts, entertainment, play cards or board games, music. 924-3691.

Children's Fair, New Ipswich, Saturday
Sponsors/volunteers needed for game area, booths. Marcy Levesque: 878-2378 or brats3414@yahoo.com.

Fixit Program
Volunteers to do minor repairs for elderly persons, and elderly persons needing assistance. 1-800-322-1073, ext. 6168.

Jaffrey-Rindge Women
Volunteers needed to match to organizations' needs. Faith Filiault: 903-2468.

Kitty Rescue, Jaffrey
Volunteers needed to help care for cats/kittens; also clerical, transportation, fostering, fundraising, publicity help needed. No offer of help too small. 532-9444.

Live Free or Die Rally, Jaffrey
Event promoting individual constitutional rights preservation needs volunteers. Jean Coudu: 532-6711 or caacp01@aol.com.

RSVP/Monadnock
Contact Kathy Baird at 924-7350 if you are interested in volunteering in any of these areas, or visit www.monadnockvolunteercenter.org for more opportunities.

Drivers Needed: Once a month for a full day to help residents get to appointments and other personal business.

Gardeners: Help with garden maintenance and planting. Neighbors-In-Deed: Providing companionship and assistance to senior citizens. One to two hours weekly.

Office Support: Various agencies need help with answering phones, greeting clients, and other office operations.

People with disabilities: Assist clients of local agencies with crafts, learning basic computer skills, cook meals, and other activities.

Same Day Surgery: Caring individuals to provide reception and updates to family members about the progress of patients.

Senior Citizens: Help with filling out intake paperwork for programs and services.

Samaritans Hotline
Samaritans of the Monadnock Region are seeking volunteers to help staff their 24-hour hotline in both the Keene and Peterborough areas, offering telephone support to individuals who are in need of someone to talk to about their feeling depressed, lonely, anxious or suicidal. 357-5510.

Sharon Arts Center, Sharon
924-4256, ext. 310. Volunteer for four hours/week for reception and computer tasks. Volunteer for two hours/week to write press releases.

Tutors/Students needed
For Project LIFT. Adult Ed. program assisting with study for GED exam, math, English, etc. Judy Fournier: 464-5285.

HOW TO SUBMIT

Send us an e-mail with your organization's needs and upcoming volunteer opportunities at volunteers@ledgertranscript.com

Parents look for help with skate park

Parents of two New Ipswich kids have worked with town to reopen park on volunteer basis

By LIZZ D'ENTREMENT
Monadnock Ledger-Transcript

NEW IPSWICH — When the Select Board closed the skate park this past spring because of behavioral concerns, two local parents offered to monitor the skate park on a volunteer basis, if the Select Board would reconsider its decision.

After several meetings with the Select Board, Jason and Megan Dysart were able to convince the town to reopen the skate park on a trial basis, after agreeing to enforce several new rules, including one that requires all youth to register with the Recreation Department prior to using the

skate park.

"It's nice to see that we were able to give 18 kids something positive to do for the summer and they appreciate it," wrote Jason Dysart in an e-mail to the Monadnock Ledger-Transcript.

In keeping with his promise to make skate boarding available to all youth, even if they do not have a helmet or a skateboard, Dysart is asking the community for help.

"If anyone has extra helmets, skateboards, ramps or rails that they would like to donate new or used, please call the New Ipswich Recreation Department," wrote Dysart, who is also seeking additional volunteers to help monitor the skate

park when it is open throughout the week.

When the skate park originally opened in August 2007, a local man donated quarter pipes and a center ramp, valued at \$12,000 to \$14,000.

Dysart, who has a 14-year-old who enjoys skate boarding, and a 6-year-old who is just learning, said his vision for the skate park includes offering training sessions for children who do not know how to skate, and eventually holding competitions.

For more information on how to donate equipment or time to the skate park, contact Kathy Perera at the New Ipswich Recreation Department, 878-2772, Ext. 8.

Support The Place To Go and enter to Win a New HP Laptop.

\$5/ticket or \$20/five. Enter as many times as you want! The drawing will be held on Friday, August 21, 2009 at the benefit concert featuring Noel Paul Stookey, best known as "Paul" from the great folk trio Peter, Paul and Mary!

The laptop is provided through the donation program at Sequoya Technologies, a local small-business IT support firm, with the help of John Brown Limited and Torphy Construction & Development. To learn more about the donation program, visit sequoyatech.com/donation or call 924-7977.

Raffle tickets are available at the Toadstool Bookshop, Steele's Stationers, the Peterborough Chamber of Commerce, at the benefit concert, from The Place to Go Board Members or by emailing starr@ftfl-law.com. Learn more about The Place to Go at sequoyatech.com/theplacetogo.

