

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

GRETCHEN LOFTIS



TRIATHLON TRAINING: BENEFITS WAY BEYOND THE PHYSICAL

When Gretchen Loftis signed up for the Ramblin Rose, she wanted to be physically challenged with a goal in mind. She didn't count on all the emotional, spiritual and family support that would pull her across the finish line.

When one of Gretchen's friends encouraged her to sign up for the Ramblin Rose in Chapel Hill in October, she decided she wanted to do her first triathlon at her own Y. She entered the May Ramblin Rose here at Finley and quickly formed a bond with members of her small training group. The trainers prepared them for every stage of the race including tips on technique and ways to improve their time. The "Rosettes," enjoyed each other's company so much; they want to compete together again. Others taught her even more.

PEOPLE MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE

"Biking the course several times with the group, doing a snake swim multiple times and running the course was incredibly helpful," she said. "Meeting new folks and getting to know the ones I already knew better was also rewarding. The emotional support Caitlin, Rosemary and Heather provided with their encouragement, motivation and knowledge was phenomenal."

Having three generations of family support also made a huge difference. Her mom, husband, sister, brother-in-law, daughter and three children

(Aubrey, 7, Katie, 4 and Dorothy, 2) all take part in exercise, Y guides, Indian Princesses, nursery and swim lessons. "I have to give a shout-out to the nursery staff that takes care of my three girls while I'm training. We are incredibly blessed at this Y. It is the people here that make the most difference. The Y is my second family!"



Gretchen Loftis with daughter Dorothy and Mom Carol Riley

A STRONG FOUNDATION

One of the most important benefits Gretchen took from her Ramblin Rose experience was the knowledge that training is more than physical. "I am a changed person after my first triathlon. Outside of the usual boost of confidence after a race, I feel like I am modeling for my kids to try new things, have courage and keep trying even when you feel defeated. Life is a constant race

where I need to have a longer goal in mind: Christ's word, his encouragement, love and support from family and friends cheering me on from the sidelines."

After the May Ramblin Rose, Gretchen feels well prepared for her upcoming race in October. Her goals now? "Have fun in October and finish with another sense of accomplishment. The May race prepared me immensely for the next one. I plan to continue to train using all wisdom and guidance from spring training."

"I cannot express enough appreciation to the Y family. The Y did a tremendous job hosting this event and I hope we will continue to!"

"I am a changed person after my first triathlon...I feel like I'm modeling for my kids to try new things." – Gretchen Loftis