Runner In Red Essay Contest

Dominique Delgado

A young athlete once said, “Look at those Runners: they are so skinny, always running and who wants to run every day”. That young athlete was me as I sat in the car watching them go by on my way home from High School every day, I could only imagine a runner’s life. I was Dominique Delgado a softball and volleyball player who had a chipmunk face, buff softball arms and someone who occasionally ran for pleasure on the softball field - from base to base.

I had played softball since I was 5 years old and I was the pitcher of all my softball teams up until my senior year of high school. My goal was to play softball at a collegiate level, little did I know, God had other plans for me. My goals and dreams as I set out to have were no longer goals or dreams. My senior year of high school I had made a life-changing decision, I broke the news to my mom “I no longer want to play softball, I’m going to be a runner now” she was speechless and surprised, but supportive. I did not have a second thought that this is what I was meant to do and I did not want to have any regrets for not trying. My senior year of high school I joined the cross-country team and from the time my foot hit the pavement I loved every minute of it. Even before stepping into my running shoes; my heart pounded quickly, my imagination ran wild, and I sure was crazy. For thinking: I a softball player can run and run well. I had a passion and a drive to run, and it showed. I even made it to CIF my first year of running in high school. My initial dream to receive a scholarship for softball refocused to now receiving a scholarship for running.

I love the energy we as runners have, the passion we share, the drive to all work together in the midst of pain. I went onto Junior College the following year where I found myself competing at the State Championship. Then after completing for two years at the Junior College level the scholarship I had once hoped for finally had arrived but in the form of cross country. I received a scholarship to run for an NAIA College where my goals and dreams have came true. Running has allowed me to compete at my highest level at Cross Country Nationals for NAIA division.

If it were not for my Cross Country high school coach who always encouraged me to try out, I would have never rekindled my passion and joy from middle school years of running. In running, I have found multiple joys through experiencing my greatest potentials, gaining not just one friend but a community of friends, pushing my bodies potential, and digging deep not only in running but in life too. I found that through life’s trials and tribulations and in the midst of pain, I always have a choice to choose JOY.

During my junior year of college, I was diagnosed with Hashimoto’s Thyroid disease; which has altered my running capability, but my passion for the sport continues to drive me. I found my JOY though running especially when I beat my own personal record. I am a leader, a captain and have shown myself I can rise above any setbacks. I am no longer the High School girl who is talking about one of the runners on the streets. I am now a college senior who is one of ‘those’ runners who I use to call “skinny, always running and wanting to run” - one long run at a time.