



Jenn Raines at the Marine Corps Marathon in 2008.

Submitted photo

One week, two marathons

Local woman runs for stroke, cancer

By Ann Efimetz

JAMES CITY — It's gearing up to be a busy fall for local resident Jenn Raines. She is training to run a pair of marathons a week apart for causes she feels strongly about.

She recently found out that she had been accepted to run the prestigious New York City Marathon on Nov. 7 as a member of the National Stroke Association's charity partner team. She was also accepted to run the Marine Corps Marathon a week earlier on Halloween in Arlington for the Susan G. Komen for the Cure.

"I will not try to break any speed records," she said with a laugh during an interview this week. "I just want to finish them and put forth a good effort. My goal is to finish in a time I can be proud of."

It's no easy feat to get selected to run with the Stroke Association's team. Only 25 runners are selected from across the country. Raines was selected from thousands of applicants.

"You have to apply with charity partner and be accepted by them," she said. "You can't just be some person who wants to run the marathon."

Raines said her experiences with stroke likely factored into her acceptance onto the team. She lost her 62-year-old mother, Jean, in 2002 from a stroke sustained during surgery. The loss has deeply impacted Raines' life.

Then, last November, her best friend Laurie Ciccone, 42, suffered a stroke while working at Kinks, Quirks & Caffeine, the store Raines owns in Colony Square Shopping Center.

Fortunately Ciccone received quick medical care and made a complete recovery.

"Laurie's husband, Chris, and I were so grateful to see her come back to life right in front of our eyes," Raines recalled.

That's why running in the NYC event was so important.

"My personal story with losing my mom, and having

a best friend who had a stroke at a young age that happened recently is I guess why they chose me. And they could tell I was enthusiastic as well."

Raines thought her chances of getting selected for the NYC Marathon were a long shot, so she had planned on running the Marine Corps Marathon, which she had done in 2008. When the NYC acceptance came in she decided to do both.

"The shock came in that I would be doing these a week apart," she said with another laugh.

Besides training almost daily to increase her stamina, Raines is working to get the word out about stroke symptoms and prevention.

"The key is that people need to know the signs that someone is having a stroke and get them to a hospital for treatment," she said. "The signs are so simple, and it makes a huge difference in a person's life."

Laurie's husband is a doctor who recognized the symptoms and got her to the hospital. Others may not be so lucky.

According to the National Stroke Association, the signs of stroke are sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body; sudden confusion; trouble speaking or understanding; sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes; sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination or sudden, severe headache with no known cause.

Raines will continue her training and fundraising for the event. She has set a goal to raise \$5,000, but she must raise a minimum of \$2,500 to participate. In the meantime, she works to educate people about stroke and hopes that they will want to learn more.

"If nothing else I would like to remind people that May is Stroke Awareness Month and it is important for them to recognize the signs of stroke," she said. "It could save a life."

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