



Kristen Hislop

Believe Every Day

By Jenna Caputo/ Photos by Matt McClosky Photography
& Contributed by the Hislop Family

Do. Believe. Achieve.

It's a mantra that not only fuels athletes, but also serves for anything in life.

Kristen Hislop believes in action. Growing up in Huntington, NY on Long Island, she was constantly surrounded by water. Her father loved sailing. Her mother, a former synchronized swimmer, wanted Kristen and her sister, Karen, to take lessons to be sure they were strong swimmers when out on the water, especially since life jackets weren't a requirement then like they are now. Her swim instructor was a competitive swimmer and suggested they attend a summer program, which led to year-round swimming right through college. Although swimming was her first love, Kristen also ran track in high school to get a letter since her school did not have a swim team.

Outside of swimming, Kristen enjoyed playing with Barbie and Dawn dolls and matchbox cars with her sister growing up, but they usually were out playing with the neighborhood kids. Summers were

all about the water – swim practices in the morning and sailing for the rest of the day. During high school and college, she also taught sailing in the summers. That should have been a challenge for a painfully shy kid, but she says, “I loved teaching sailing. I think back now how amazing it was that parents sent their kids on a power boat towing ten small boats with precious cargo across Long Island Sound with me and the other instructors under the age of 21. I guess since my parents had sent my sister and I off each summer to various regattas and often we returned with hardware (awards), it was deemed okay.”

She worked for a few years in New York City before heading to the University of Colorado for her MBA in marketing. One day a friend mentioned doing a triathlon, and Kristen thought it sounded fun. They gathered a group of friends and headed to a sprint tri. “The swim was actually in an outdoor pool, then we ran to our bikes in a parking lot,” she remembers. “It was a hill to get out to the road and I had no idea that I should have checked my gearing. I jumped on the bike and immediately dropped my chain. I figured out how to get it back on, but not before I was covered with grease. My beautiful

handle bar tape was covered in grease too! I kind of forgot about it during the run, so I must have wiped sweat from my face a few times. I was a mess coming across the finish line. It was so much fun and I was hooked!”

Her husband, Reid, took a new job that required them to move back east, landing here in the Capital District. Kristen decided to take some time off to stay home with their two boys, Alex (now 18) and Jack (16), who were five and three at the time. Never one to stay still, Kristen quickly found a triathlon group at the YMCA and began volunteer coaching.

Since fitness had always been such a big part of her life, it seemed natural to continue. She earned her spinning certification and then started coaching with TEAM in Training, the team run/cycle/triathlon program created to help support the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society (LLS). Participants sign up to raise money and in return receive coaching, a plan and entry into an event. Shortly after this, Kristen decided to get her personal training and USA triathlon coaching certifications, and Hislop Coaching was born. She now works with all kinds of runners, triathletes and personal training clients. She has added nutrition and metabolic efficiency certifications to her list and conducts resting metabolic and VO2 testing for interested clients. Through a series of tests using a breathing tube and mask, resting metabolic testing measures the oxygen in and carbon dioxide out, along with heart rate and other data to determine how many calories you need a day, how many calories you burn while active and your current fuel mix of fats and carbs. This is a much more accurate tool than the online and gym calculators since it tells you YOUR optimal zone as opposed to just the “average” person your age.

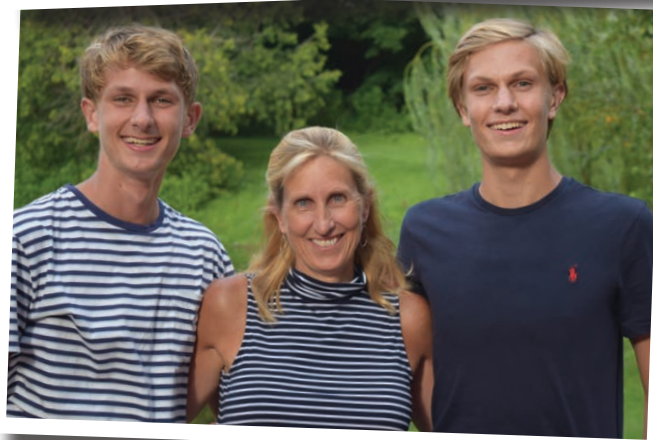
She never really considered coaching when she lived in Colorado since she was surrounded by Olympians and national champions, but she has now found her niche and loves the flexibility of working with each athlete in a customized way. “I love getting people to realize their potential,” she says. “So often people have untapped potential! It is hard to see that in yourself. The beauty of having a coach is that person can identify and grow your strengths while challenging you to focus on your weaknesses.” It’s frustrating for her to see people not valuing their health as much as they should. “People are willing to pay for a magic pill, but don’t want to spend money on working to become stronger and healthier. If there was a magic pill that really worked, we would ALL know about it,” she says. “I’m an optimist. I truly believe with the right mindset, you can achieve your dreams.”

Always wanting to spread the message and urge others to take action, she is on the boards of the Adirondack USA Track and Field organization (the entity that takes athletes to the Olympics), the Shen Track Club, USA Triathlon Women’s National Committee, Women for Tri (Ironman’s international program for women), and US Masters Swimming. She also hosts clinics, writes for the Hudson Mohawk Road Runners Pacesetter newsletter and volunteers with the Saratoga and Capital District Tri Clubs.

In addition, she worked for seven years with a LUNA Chix Team, the LUNA bars initiative to get women out running, riding and swimming, and of course, to hand out LUNA bars! Her team ranged from 5-9 women and they led clinics, rides, runs and more over the years, including a “splash and dash” at Lake Desolation.

Ten years ago she was asked to be the Head Coach for what was

at the time, a new Training Challenge program for the Freihofer’s Run for Women. Since then, the program has grown to include multiple levels, seeing about 300 women race each year. Now the coordinator of the run itself, Kristen is excited for this year’s 42nd annual community race. “I truly believe this is the most empowering event for women in the region,” she says. “5k is doable for any age and most any ability. We have a lot of women run who did everything possible to get out of the high school mile. The joy and sense of accomplishment on their faces at the finish line brings tears to my eyes. The race is a celebration of family. Women running this year started with the kids’ run when they were five and six. Some will run with sisters and others with friends. We have four generation teams, and of course, we have some absolutely amazing talent in the area who gets to be front and center on May 30, 2020. I’ve done many all-women events over the years, and to have the roads wide open to women is just the best. The energy race day blows away people who attend for the first time.” For those who are not runners, there are many volunteer opportunities as well for both men and women.



Her family is active as well. Reid now runs sales and marketing for Trelleborg – a manufacturing firm in Niskayuna. As a child, he participated in most sports in his home of Edmonton, Canada, especially gymnastics, track, hockey and competitive skiing. Excelling at all, he is particularly proud of his Provincial Badminton title. Reid and Kristen met at a software company in Colorado, and she roped him into running with her. They eventually signed up for a marathon in Napa Valley as their goal race. At mile 23, he stopped and proposed. “I wouldn’t let him stop to celebrate since he was on

a sub 4-hour pace!” she exclaims, and they finished the race. Now Reid usually cycles or does Pilates.

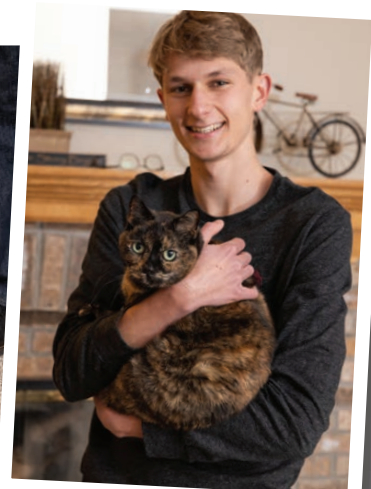
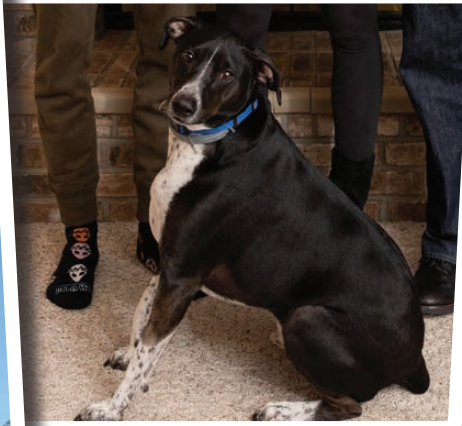
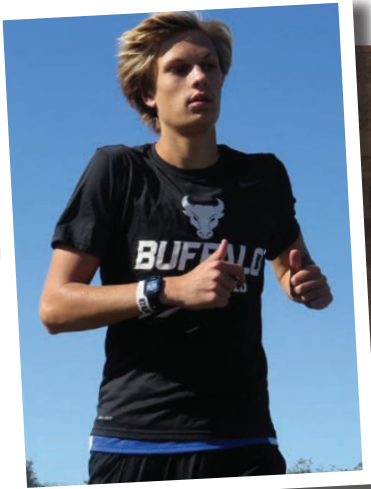
Alex is a freshman at the University of Buffalo in the exercise science program and heading for his five-year doctorate in physical therapy. As a child, he participated in most sports (his first word was even “ball!”), but eventually he focused on running. He now runs cross country as well as indoor and outdoor track & field.

Jack is a junior at Shen, interested in the sciences as well and has followed closely in his brother’s sports footsteps, also concentrating on cross country and indoor and outdoor track & field. He was recently chosen to be on the Student Athletic Advisory Committee for Shen.

“Running is not an easy sport,” says Kristen. “I’ve always told the guys you are in it as long as you love it. When you don’t love it,

“Tough situations, scary stuff they shouldn’t have to deal with – at any age. I’m so thankful that my guys are grounded. They have had their fair share of challenges, but they face them with grace and move on with determination. I love their optimism, focus, dedication and ability to show emotion. Their dad and I have provided a good balance that I now see resulted in them being balanced. If only I could say I planned it that way! We have a lot of fun together.”

Last year was “the year of Alex” as they celebrated his senior year accomplishments, and running to all the senior activities as well as his competitions. Next year will be the same for the “year of Jack.” In between, Kristen is enjoying the upcoming Freihofers Run, and in April will be heading to Boston to run the marathon there, before a couple of upcoming 70.3 triathlons (half Ironman) as well as some shorter tris and road races.



you take a break. They have a very healthy outlook and balance the training well.”

Their family also now includes brother/sister rescue cats that think they are dogs, London and Titan, and their dog, Kobe, a southern rescue mix.

Despite their love for athletics, their family leads a balanced (and busy!) life. The boys both play trumpet, and Alex is a wonderful singer. Jack and Reid both have a very funny wit, and they all like to get outside and enjoy all the parks, lakes, mountains and outdoor activities our area has to offer.

“These days there are so many issues that kids face,” says Kristen.

She urges everyone to live by her coaching motto of “Do. Believe. Achieve.” “Get out there and make a difference! I like to compete as does the rest of my family, but that isn’t for everyone. So how about volunteering? Give a little of your time and what you will receive back will be so much more valuable. I truly believe that volunteering gives everyone the opportunity to grow and most likely you’ll be helping someone else achieve something that maybe they never thought was possible.”

For more information about the Freihofer’s Run and opportunities to help, visit www.freihofersrun.com.