

February 2019 - Lisa Obser

Congratulations to our February Volunteer of the Month, Lisa Obser. She is a Kilometer Kids coach at Ashford Park Elementary, sharing coaching duties with Ed Culler. Together, they lead the school's run club, inspiring both students and parents to be involved and support the club. Ashford's Run Club has placed in the top 3 of most participants at Be Healthy Georgia (now Publix Atlanta Kid's Marathon) and regularly has one of the biggest Kilometer Kids Teams.

Lisa says that Atlanta Track Club has been there for her in big and small ways. From running her first 10K at the AJC Peachtree Road Race and as a participant of the In-Training Program to train for her first marathon, Lisa hopes to continue to support the Club's effort to build Running City USA!



How long have you been volunteering with Atlanta Track Club/Kilometer Kids?

I have been volunteering with Atlanta Track Club and Kilometer Kids since January of 2014. We, my co-coach Ed Culler and I, felt this was a perfect fit to enhance our school running program.

Do you remember your first time volunteering? What brought you back again?

I began volunteering in 2013. My son Connor was a member of the school run club. I am an avid runner and wanted to be a part of something that promoted kids moving. We wanted to provide a structured curriculum for the kids to follow. We found it in Kilometer Kids.

What is your favorite Atlanta Track Club/Kilometer Kids event? Why?

We have truly enjoyed the Publix Atlanta Kids Marathon as well as the Kilometer Kids Fun Run at Blackburn Park. It is inspiring to see kids from other schools/areas represented and all running together.

What is one of your best memories from volunteering?

I have so many fond memories. One in particular is hearing from kids that “graduated” to say that they miss Run Club and would love to come back. I hope that the program provides a foundation for them to find their passion, whatever it may be.

What is your favorite thing about coaching Kilometer Kids?

My favorite thing about coaching is watching the kids grow over the years from little Jr. Run Clubbers (Kindergarten) all the way through to seasoned runners (5th grade). Many have become quite fast and have placed in their top of their age groups at various races.

Do you have a favorite team activity?

I enjoy the two mile training run we do at the end of the Spring season. It is a culmination of all the kids' hard work, effort, time and dedication to the program. We incorporate Atlanta Track Club elites or staff, Big Peach Running Co., as well as our volunteer coaches. I love that it has a “race” vibe. It gets the kids excited about running.

Do you have any advice or words of wisdom for any new Kilometer Kids coaches?

I think Atlanta Track Club is such an incredible organization to support. It has so many different facets and ways to get involved. It brings you closer to your community and connects you with amazing individuals that you may not have crossed paths with if it weren't for these events.

What organizations do you volunteer with beyond Atlanta Track Club?

I enjoy giving time to organizations that support kids, whether that means being healthy and active or raising money for kids that are struggling with health issues.

I have been involved with Coins4CURE (which supports the efforts of CURE Childhood Cancer) since 2015. It started as a school fundraiser that collected spare change in the month of September (Childhood Cancer Awareness Month) and we have reached out and now it is community wide in Brookhaven. It is supported by various businesses, individuals, families at Ashford Park as well as community-wide. We have raised \$15,000 in spare change since 2015. Many kids empty their piggy banks in support. That warms my heart to see kids helping other kids.

How many Kilometer Kids/Atlanta Track Club practices and races do you typically volunteer at during the year? How many events outside of Atlanta Track Club?

We have 45+ Kilometer kids practices over the course of the spring and fall and I am on the organizing committee for the Brookhaven Bolt 5k in May. Typically it involves volunteering from January all the way up to race day in May. That run serves as the final event for the Run Club (which consists of about 150 kids) and raises money for the school, so I help coordinate the kids as well. As my own kids get older I would like to take a more active role in volunteering for Atlanta Track Club races.



What do you do for a living?

I guess you would call me a semi-professional volunteer. Run Club is seasonal but takes up a large portion of my time from the planning to the execution stages. In addition to the planning committee for the 5k fundraiser, I am on the board of the school's Foundation as well. We have worked over the past 6 years to raise money to do a complete field renovation at the school that is finally coming to fruition as we speak! The kids will soon have a new playground and running path!

Tell us something interesting about yourself.

I began running consistently in 2011. My first 10k was the AJC Peachtree Road Race, which was intimidating with 60,000 runners. I ran it alone and had no idea what to expect. After that I was hooked, I extended my goals to half marathons. Then I decided to run a full marathon in 2012 (Marine Corps Marathon). I trained under Atlanta Track Club's fall marathon training program. I met several people that I cherish as close friends to this day. Those people motivated, challenged, and inspired me. With their support I was able to qualify for Boston for 2015. I could not have done it without my "posse" that I met through Atlanta Track Club. For that I will always be grateful.