

Music teacher with Olympic dreams

BY JAMES GALLOWAY

Herricks music teacher and elite runner Jodie Robertson's day typically starts at 4 a.m.

First, with a couple hours on the bike or maybe an hour or so in the pool. Then, it's off to class, followed by a brisk 10-to-16 mile run in the afternoon. She adds in one long run on the weekend for good measure, usually between 18 and 21 miles, she said.

Bedtime is around 8:30 p.m.

"I've actually been doing a lot less running than I used to do," said Robertson, who is training for her first triathlon. "I actually swim and bike a lot now, too."

In 2012, Robertson placed 57th in the U.S. Olympic Trials marathon with a personal best of 2 hours, 42 minutes, 31 seconds.

But since then, her personal best has dropped by about eight minutes, and she is gearing up for the 2016 trials, for which she has already qualified.

So far, Robertson has the 21st fastest women's qualifying time for the 2016 Olympic Trials, according to the USA Track and Field website. She ran the Mohawk Hudson River Marathon in 2:34:22, or about 5 minutes, 52 seconds per mile for just over 26 miles.

In March, Robertson placed fourth among U.S. women and

seventh overall at the Los Angeles marathon.

"I've never even come in the top 20 at a U.S. championship. To come in the top 10, I would have been happy with - to come in fourth was great," she said.

But, she noted, "It kind of leaves you wanting more."

For the 2016 trials, Robertson said she would like to improve on her 2012 performance.

"If I could run a PR (personal record), place a little higher than I did back in 2012, those would be good goals," she said. But "as long as I keep enjoying it, I'll keep doing it. I feel like you get more out the process than that one goal."

Only the top three women at the trials qualify for the Olympic Team, however, something that Robertson said would be a "long shot" for her.

"To crack the top 20 this time around would be a huge feat," she said of the Olympic Trials.

Robertson said she was not a standout in high school, though she ran cross-country and track and qualified for the state championships.

"I was one of the faster girls, but not the fastest for sure," she said.

But at SUNY Potsdam, Robertson was named an all-American in cross-country her junior year. In 2011, the university inducted her into its athletic hall



Jodie Robertson crosses the finish line at the Mohawk Hudson River Marathon.

of fame.

"I think I found my niche more so in the marathon and longer distance, definitely more my strength than the shorter stuff," she said. "I definitely like the longer stuff and have found a lot more success in that."

A stress fracture kept Robertson on the sidelines her senior year, and for nearly three years thereafter, she said.

"I kind of dealt with that sev-

eral more years when I started my running again," she said.

Robertson said the Herricks School District has supported her throughout her training. She took a year off to train for the 2012 Olympic Trials, something not in the plans for 2016.

"It's really nice to [teach] and train. I feel like I run better and train better when I'm busier," she said. "I feel like I'm running faster now than I was at the

Olympic trials. I feel like if it ain't broke, don't fix it."

She added that she enjoys her day job, too, another perk to stay. Robertson teaches band lessons at the middle school and general music classes for kindergartners and first graders at Denton Avenue and Searingtown schools.

"I have a great job," she said. "I get to sing and play music with my kids all day. They're fabulous."

COMMUNITY NEWS

Holocaust survivor to speak at Port synagogue

The Community Synagogue of Port Washington is hosting this year's Port Washington Jewish Community Yom HaShoah Commemoration on Thursday, April 16, 2015 at 7:30 p.m.

Memorial prayers and lighting of the Holocaust menorah will be followed by a presentation by Holocaust survivor Ethel Katz.

Katz, will speak about her experiences during the Holocaust, how her family was murdered and how she narrowly escaped and survived the last few months of the war on her own.

Katz was born and grew up in Buczac, Poland, which is now part of Ukraine, as part of a large close-knit family.

The German Army entered



Ethel Katz

the Buczac in 1941 followed closely by mobile killing squads who murdered her twin brother and other young Jewish men in a forest near the town.

The rest of her family escaped immediate destruction

by hiding in barns and fields for several years, reliant upon their non-Jewish neighbors for food.

Later, Katz's family members were murdered in their hiding place while she narrowly escaped and survived that last few months of the war on her own.

The Soviet Army liberated her town in 1944. After the war, Katz emigrated to the United States, where she raised a family.

She has written a memoir of her experiences during the Holocaust, "Our Tomorrows Never Came."

Open to the community, this presentation takes place, at The Community Synagogue, 160 Middle Neck Road, Port Washington.

'Shed the Meds' program April 18

Senator Jack M. Martins (R-7th Senate District), in partnership with the Nassau County Police Department and the Manhasset Community Coalition Against Substance Abuse (CASA), is sponsoring a "Shed the Meds" program to help residents safely dispose of unused or expired medications.

The "Shed the Meds" program will be held on Saturday, April 18 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Shelter Rock Elementary School, 27A Shelter Rock Road, Manhasset.

Participating in the programs is easy; residents will be able to drive up, drop off their old or unused medications, and drive away. Residents can bring any type of medication for disposal,

however needles cannot be accepted. All collected medication will be safely disposed of by officers from the Nassau County Police Department who will be supervising the program.

Safe disposal helps protect the environment and eliminates the risk of these drugs getting into the hands of small children or those who might misuse them. Improper disposal of medications, such as pouring them down the drain or flushing them down the toilet, can potentially pollute local waterways.

Residents who need more information about the "Shed the Meds" program on April 18th can call Senator Martins' office at (516) 746-5924.