



LIZ FERRO | 42, of Rocky River
Girls with Sole

GIVEN A SPORTING CHANCE

With the help of the Cleveland community, Liz Ferro has changed the lives of more than 150 local girls through sports and fitness — just as sports and fitness helped change her life. Ferro is the founder and executive director of Girls with Sole!, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing fitness and wellness programs for free to girls who have experienced abuse of any kind or are at-risk.

A well-known competitor on the local scene, Ferro offers her experience to demonstrate the power that sports can play in a person's life. A foster child who was adopted at the age of 2, she experienced sexual abuse as a child. She credits athletics and fitness for giving her the self-esteem and inner strength needed throughout her life to overcome difficult times and view herself and her body as purposeful and important.

With Girls with Sole, Ferro helps girls realize they have choices and to make healthy ones. Explaining the organization's goals on its Web site, girlswithsole.com, she writes: "Girls with Sole will offer a large variety of fitness and wellness programs ... to girls who need someone to believe in them so that they may believe in themselves Focusing on healthy living, good nutrition, exercise and wellness will help girls make healthier

choices in other parts of their lives"

Ferro competes, in part, because she wants to continue to inspire the girls. She raced in the Rev 3 Ironman in September in Sandusky in honor of the girls and to raise awareness. As well, she has completed three Cleveland, two Towpath and a Columbus marathon, as well as last year's Bill's Bad Ass 50K in Cuyahoga Valley National Park among dozens of other races in the past 15 years.

Ferro, who is married and has two children, has been a competitive athlete since the age of 6. She has been competing in triathlons since 1993 and completed 11 marathons, three Ironman distance triathlons and countless other half Ironman, Olympic-distance and sprint-distance triathlons, as well as many duathlons, running road races and adventure races.

SHARE YOUR STORY ✉ Tell us about the "Everyday Athletes" in your circle who inspired you with their extraordinary commitment or results. OSF wants to publish their story in the magazine or online so others can be inspired by them. E-mail to osfeditor@tntpuplications.com.

Angela, a U.S. Triathlon All-American, runs Angela Forster Training. She is certified as a U.S. Triathlon Level 2 Coach and NESTA Personal Trainer.

GIDEON OSWITCH

45, of Kent
Boston Marathon

Hard Work for Boston

Gideon Oswitch knows all about perseverance and patience. After seven years and 15 tries, he finally qualified to toe the starting line at the 2010 Boston Marathon.

"For years I tried and tried to qualify, but came up short by as few as three minutes on two occasions, but I never lost faith in my ability and training to finally arrive at Hopkinton," Oswitch wrote in an e-mail to Ohio Sports & Fitness.

Finally, at the Chicago Marathon in 2008, he made it.

"Nailing Chicago '08 was my admittance ticket to Boston," Oswitch wrote. "And I can honestly say that when I hit the starting mats at the 114th Boston Marathon last April, I actually said aloud, with a huge smile, 'Dreams Come True.'"

Oswitch's message of inspiration for others trying to qualify is simple: "Dream your painting ... then paint your dream," he wrote.

Also simple is the strategy he used to achieve his dream and that he advises others to follow: "Never give up on yourself, train with others that have the same goal, pick flat courses, plus stay positive and focused. Boston is not going anywhere, and you can make it."

As for the struggle, Oswitch adds: "The moment the volunteer at the Boylston Street finish line drapes the finisher's medal around your neck, it will be worth all the sacrifice, training and hard work — I promise."

Oswitch has been married to Beth (seen in the picture) for 18 years. They have two children and live and run in Kent. Having qualified again this past fall, he'll be back at Boston in 2011.

