



MEMBER OF THE MONTH - DECEMBER 2016

Ami Kelly-Hodge



How did you hear about Pacifica Runners?

A few years ago, I received an invite from my running partner, Holly, to join the PR Facebook group.

How long have you been a runner?

16 years

How did you get into running?

When my family and I moved here from SF in 2000, I started taking our then 18 month son on stroller walks along the trails in Pacifica. I remember seeing people running up and over the hills here and thinking "My God, that's so impressive. I don't think I could ever do that!". In fact, the idea of even running was pretty unfathomable. I can't remember what possessed me, but I do remember on one of my solo walks, along Weiler Ranch Trail in San Pedro Valley Park, daring myself to run as far as I could. Needless to say, I didn't get very far, probably less than 1/4 mile, before I was breathless. As I stopped to collect myself, I saw a couple women my age freely running past me and having a conversation with each other. That convinced me to keep pushing myself a little further each time I got out there. After a few years of jog/walking for a mile or two here and there, I found a couch to 5K program and followed it to the T. By the end of it, I ran my first 5K in 2004. I finished in a little over 33 minutes. Since then, I've run lots of races from 5Ks to a marathon. Every year, I get a little bit better. Even if I get injured, I always try to learn something from it and always come back stronger and more determined!

Do you have a favorite race(s)?

Bay To Breakers! I've been participating in this race since 2001. Even though I didn't really run much of it the first couple times I did it, I always knew I wanted to someday. By 2008, I was able to run the entire course. Now I make a point of running it every year and what's really great is that I now participate with my friend and running partner, Holly Rios. We even come up with themed costumes! This last year, we dressed as BB-8 and R2D2 from Star Wars. :)

Last year (2015), I ran my first marathon at California International in Sacramento. It was a fantastic course for a first time marathoner and the people cheering along the way really made it special. But what made it really great for me was that I qualified for the Boston Marathon in 2017 and was accepted. Hopefully, by this time next year, I'll be able to say that Boston is one of my favorite races too!

Now that I'm a Board Member for Pacifica Runners, I am really enjoying the planning aspects of our local races. It's fun seeing a community of people participate in something that keeps them healthy and inspires others!

What are your favorite running trails/routes?

Without a doubt, my favorite running trail is right along our Pacifica coastline. From Pedro Point to Mussel Rock. It is by far, the best trail for scenery, terrain, and options for distance. And the trails in the back of the valley at San Pedro Park are breathtaking and challenging. I feel so fortunate to live here!

Also, enjoy running the 4.6 mile loop of Lake Merced and the out and back of Sawyer Camp Trail down the Peninsula.

What are your future running goals?

Currently, I am on the tail end of a terrible bout of bacterial pneumonia which has kept me from running for over 6 weeks! Once I'm clear to run again, which I hope is soon, my only goal is to make it to the starting line of the Boston Marathon. That means training smart and training regularly. Also, keeping myself as healthy as possible in every sense of the word!

What do you enjoy most about Pacifica Runners?

Pacifica Runners is more than just a running group. It's about a community of people who love the idea of being healthy and finding new ways to challenge themselves. Seeing families come together at our races is a really special thing and that look of accomplishment on kids' faces when they reach the finish line is absolutely priceless! Also, our group is welcoming of all running levels. Our long time members know that running is all about the journey and that we all share the same path whatever our goals are! (Cheesy enough for ya?!...But it's true!)

Any other cool info about yourself?

My grandmother was once a famous Hollywood actress in the 1930s and early 1940s. Some of you are old enough to know about Roy Rogers' and the old Western movies. Before Dale Evans was his leading lady, my grandmother, Sally Payne, was his trusty sidekick! If you do a google search "Sally Payne actress", you'll see pics of her and links to her movies. Some are up on Youtube, as well.

Ironically, that day I ran out of breath on my first attempt at running was the beginning of my love for coaching! I'm also a certified personal trainer and RRCA certified running coach. I seek out ways to learn new exercises and techniques that will help others be better at what they love to do. Being a running coach allows me to help people be accountable for their goals and challenge them in areas that they may need a little help with.