



Glen Carbon Man Completes His Dream Of Finishing Boston Marathon

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BETHALTO - Mark Dorris, a Bethalto native and Glen Carbon resident, completed the 2022 Boston Marathon in 3 hours, 8 minutes. He finished in the top 15 percent of the 30,000 runners that day.



When you see the joy in his face as he crosses the finish line, you don't see the hours and miles of discipline he devoted to make that happen.

Dorris' interest in running began when he was a student at Zion Lutheran School, Bethalto. His track and field coach at that time was Tim Henkelman. "What you do in elementary school can have a big impact on your future," Dorris says. "I'm thankful for the opportunities I had to compete with other schools as a Zion Bethalto student." He went on to compete in cross country as a Civic Memorial High School student.

Dorris is now the Associate Director of Learning Spaces in Academic and Client Support Services at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, where he earned his bachelor's and master's degrees.

In 2013, Dorris ran in his first race as an adult: the St. Louis Rock 'n' Roll Half Marathon. "I remember my first long distance run to prepare for that race," he said. "I ran from Bethalto to Holiday Shores on July 4. I thought I was going to die before I got home, but I made it. That was 15 miles, the longest I had ever run. That's when I knew I could do a marathon."

In August 2014, Dorris competed in IRONMAN Louisville — a 2.4-mile swim followed by a 112-mile bike ride and then a 26-mile run. All in the same day.

Then he set his sights on the Boston Marathon, the world's oldest annual marathon and one of the world's most prestigious road racing events, as his next goal to achieve. To qualify in his age group, he had to run a marathon in 3:05 or faster. He qualified in 2020, but the 2020 Boston Marathon was run as a Virtual Experience. He had to qualify again in 2021, and he did. But the number accepted was decreased to a total of 14,609 runners, and he didn't make the cut.

For the 2022 race, he qualified once again. This time, he knew it was really going to happen. His training regimen consisted of running 80 to 100 miles per week with 80 percent easy running and 20 percent focused on speed and hills. After familiarizing himself with the Boston course, he ran downhill on a treadmill twice a week. He completed a long run once each week plus two fast runs. His diet consisted of 70 percent carbohydrates of any kind plus plenty of protein.

Reflecting on running in the 126th Boston Marathon and achieving his goal, Dorris said the most surprising aspect of the race for him was the 500,000 people along the route who were cheering for the runners. "There was someone cheering for me every second of the race," he said. "Boston is so into this race. They brag about it just like we brag about the St. Louis Cardinals."

After completing IRONMAN Louisville in 2014, Mark Dorris set the goal of running in the Boston Marathon. Submitted photo by MarathonFoto/Iconic Group Inc. Used with permission.

Dorris' biggest challenge during the race? "I had to keep myself from running too fast," he says. "If you run too fast, you can tear up your quads. I had to take the downhill seriously. I had to maintain my control to finish. In a previous marathon, I hadn't trained well enough for the hills, and my legs totally locked up."

Mark Dorris qualified for the Boston Marathon in 2020, 2021 and 2022. He finally got to compete in the race on April 18, 2022.

"You're going to go through times when life doesn't make sense, when you're going to question or want to drop out," Dorris said. "When you have a Christian foundation, you will always come back to that because it's relevant for your life. The Christian values I was raised with are always in my heart and mind."

For more information or to register your student in Preschool or Grades Kindergarten through 8 at Zion Lutheran School Bethalto, go to <http://zlsbethalto.org>. Contact Zion Lutheran School directly at 618-377-5507 or schooloffice@zionbethalto.org

[Zion Lutheran School, Bethalto, Illinois](#) provides a Christ-centered approach to life and learning for students and their families. In 2019, 2020 and 2021, Zion Bethalto received the "Best Local Private School" award, as voted by Riverbend area residents and recognized by *The Alton Telegraph*. Since 1962, the school has excelled in its safe, nurturing environment and commitment to academic excellence. Today, students in Preschool through Grade 8 enjoy a variety of opportunities to grow in their love for learning and love of Jesus. Conveniently located in Bethalto, the school welcomes all who desire a quality Christian education.

If you finished the Boston Marathon, send photos and information about your quest to dbrannan@riverbender.com.



