

Great Wall Marathon



Lori Rusinski of Eagle Watch recently traveled with her husband and son to China to participate in Great Wall of China Marathon. The 13-mile race included a three-mile stretch on the Great Wall of China.

Lori Rusinski of Eagle Watch loves to run marathons - even across the Great Wall of China.

Along with her son, Jesse Rusinski, she participated in a half-marathon last month, about 13 miles, in China with a portion of the race along the wondrous wall.

Lori's husband, Gerry, also made the trip and participated in a 5K race offered as part of the marathon event.

The Great Wall Marathon is organized by Adventure Marathon (www.adventure-marathon.com), which runs marathons across the globe, combining sports and exercise with great scenery. Other races take place in South Africa, Jordan and Greenland.

Mrs. Rusinski, 55, began running in her mid-40s to manage her weight.

"Keeping my weight under control has always been a challenge for me," she said.

She started running with a work colleague from Weiss & Associates in Atlanta, where she is a paralegal, during their lunch hour. Soon she was running in local races, some half-marathons and a full marathon in January 2009.

"It becomes addicting," she said about running.

She and her running partner heard about the Great Wall Marathon and thought it would be a great adventure.

"I thought, 'If I don't do it now, I will never do it,'" Mrs. Rusinski said. "I needed to seize the moment."

While her running buddy was unable to make the trip, Mrs. Rusinski traveled with her husband and son to China to participate in the marathon. Races included in the event were a full marathon, a half-marathon, a 10K race and a 5K race.

To train for the race, she participated in a "grueling" spin class and regularly ran up and down the staircase in her office building, which includes 25 flights of stairs. The Great Wall of China has 5,000 steps incorporated in the full marathon.

A respiratory illness kept her from training for six weeks in November last year, forcing her to change her goal from the full marathon to the half-marathon.

"The steps made it very challenging," she said.

The Rusinskis arrived in Beijing early for a day of shopping before Inspection Day, which allows race participants to check out the course.

The first part of the half-marathon was a three-mile road leading to the wall.

"By the time I reached the wall, I was feeling very strong and very, very excited," she said, adding while the steps were a challenge, the excitement of the run made it enjoyable.

After running along the wall, the race went through a neighboring village for seven miles. The path was lined by locals watching the race, which she said was an interesting experience.

"They were holding their hands out for people to slap them as they ran by," she said, adding the cheers from the Chinese locals were an unexpected perk. "So many people asked to take their picture with us."

After making it to the finish line, Mrs. Rusinski was presented a medal in the shape of the Great Wall, ending what she described as a "great experience."

Her husband, who describes himself as "not a runner," said his wife had talked about the race for three years and was so excited to finally complete it.

"You hear people say, 'I ran the Boston Marathon' or 'I ran the New York Marathon.' But when you say, 'I ran the Great Wall marathon,' they are like, 'Whoa,'" he said.