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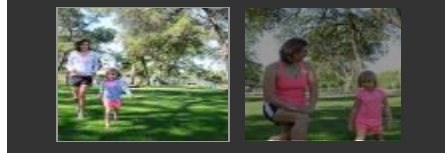
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Publishing's a marathon, not a sprint

Local author Katherine Richards' book was inspired by her daughter's interest in running

By: Paul Cambra, Features Editor



When Katherine Richards' 2 1/2-year-old daughter asked to join her on a run, she had no idea what it would lead to. But now, a year later, Richards is on the verge of publishing her first book, "My Favorite Run," which recounts that special time shared between mom and daughter and hopes to plant the running bug in other children. We caught up with Richards and asked her about the book, her passion for running and her experience with Kickstarter, the cloud funding program.

You've been an accountant and a personal trainer. Did you ever think you would be starting your own publishing company?

"It wasn't my plan, but then the book wasn't either. The reason I chose self publishing is, looking on the internet, there's not a lot of books about kids running. I want to get this story out there. The traditional publishing way would take two years for that to happen and that's if somebody falls in love with it. That's how long it takes. I didn't want to wait, so I decided I would publish it. In doing so I had to come up with a name. Fit Kids Publishing, I thought 'Wow, maybe there's something there.' But being an entrepreneur most of my life, I know better than to think I can wear all of the hats. Right now I need to do a lot of getting the word out, one of the biggest challenges independent authors have."

How has Kickstarter worked for you so far?

"It hasn't taken off yet. I put out a large goal of



My Favorite Run

Pre-order on Kickstarter:

\$20 gets you a signed hardcover first edition copy as well as the e-book and a PDF image for the kids to color. No tax, no shipping fee.

Info:

www.kickstarter.com/projects/myfavorite-run-the-first-boo...,
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\$10,000. I am at \$2,000 and there are only a few weeks left. It's not over, but the statistics behind it show the most successful ones have a quick ramp up at the beginning. The catch is, if you don't reach your goal then you do not get funded, it's all or nothing. I wanted to print thousands of books so I set a large goal."

What has been your favorite part of the process in getting the book to where it is today?

"The support I've received from family and friends. I've been receiving emails and texts from people I don't know sharing stories of runs with their kids. I do have a strong following on Facebook that hopefully will translate to more people getting the book once it's available. The conversation on the page has just been beyond expectations. People are really excited about books that have to do with kids' fitness."

Your bedtime story recap of the run is essentially what inspired this book. How much of it actually happened as you remember it?

"It's based on our story and on Auburn, too. At one point in the book, Anna sees a deer and she wants to go after it. My editor is from New York and she said 'Katherine, I know kids books like animals but you don't see deer when you run around the block.' I told her 'In my block you do, this is Auburn.' I wanted to keep it true to us. Some might not think much of it is, but a lot of it is."

Did your daughter have any input into the content?

Anna loves to say 'I did it.' At the end of the book she high-fives her family and saying 'I did it.' So I was listening to her words, but as far as actual input, no."

You've been running since you were 8, and became a national champion as a freshman in the 3,000 meters. What was that experience like?

"When you're at that level you're traveling around a lot, but the final took place in Washington state. Fitness has always been a part of my life, running is a passion."

Then you learned you had ulcerative colitis, and after 10 years of illness, you had your colon removed. How did that affect you as a runner?

"Having the mentality that 'Hey I'm this runner, I'm a strong, fit athlete,' it took me awhile to realize this was a serious illness. In my early 20s, my quality of life was not what it needed to be. After surgery I felt better immediately. When you have colitis, your risk of getting colon cancer shoots way up. I remember being 23 and thinking 'I don't want that.' I wasn't really able to run. I still tried to lead an active healthy lifestyle but it was tough."

A few months after surgery you did your only marathon, walking most of it. Ever think to do one again?

"Never say never. I probably shouldn't have done it so quickly but I was young. Then we moved to California from St. Louis. I was in love with running. I had my health and running became fun again. As far as my colitis, it's a chronic illness, it lets me know it's there now and then."

Have either of your children show an interest in running?

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"Anthony (8) plays baseball and golf. Anna (3) loves to swim. But that's good because it's more about just getting out and doing something."

How often do you run together these days?

"Not every Sunday but on occasion we will go out on the three-mile loop. Chris (her husband) on his bike pulling Anna in the Burley. Anthony's on his bike and I'm running with the dog. Anna will want to get out of the Burley and run with me. But it's less about the schedule and more about incorporating it into something fun."

Do you plan on using the book as a platform to promote kids fitness?

"I have ideas, but I need to focus on getting this book published right now."

Have you thought about sending a copy to the First Lady?

"A couple of people have mentioned that to me. I think what she's done is amazing, putting childhood obesity in the limelight. She's making a difference. We're starting to see some research where the numbers are turning around. It's not all great but we're starting to see it. I applaud her for that. Let's just get our kids moving."

What is your favorite run?


"A run with my daughter, just being able to share my love for running and fitness with my kids, that's what it's all about. On my own, from my doorstep through Maidu, hugging the canyon, back by Railhead Park. I like the trail and road combination. Sometimes in town though I get sidetrack for a coffee or something. But I've definitely evolved as a runner. I think that's OK, that's part of it. Sometimes you're racing, sometimes you're just out to enjoy the beautiful day."

Keywords:


[Katherine Karagiannis Richards](#) [My Favorite Run](#) [Fit Kids Publishing](#) [Kickstarter](#)


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