

# Ridgewood Living



## The Kaplanis Family

ON THE RUN AND RUNNING A BUSINESS

# Ridgewood Living

**PUBLICATION TEAM**

**Publisher:** Nella Veldran

**Content Coordinator:** Kathryn Komsa Schmidt

**Designer:** Alaina Smith

**Contributing Photographer:** Taryn Carroll Photography



**ADVERTISING CONTACT**

**Nella Veldran**

**Email:** [nveldran@bestversionmedia.com](mailto:nveldran@bestversionmedia.com)

**Phone:** (201) 522-9743

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FEBRUARY 20 ..... APRIL

MARCH 20 ..... MAY

APRIL 20 ..... JUNE

MAY 20 ..... JULY

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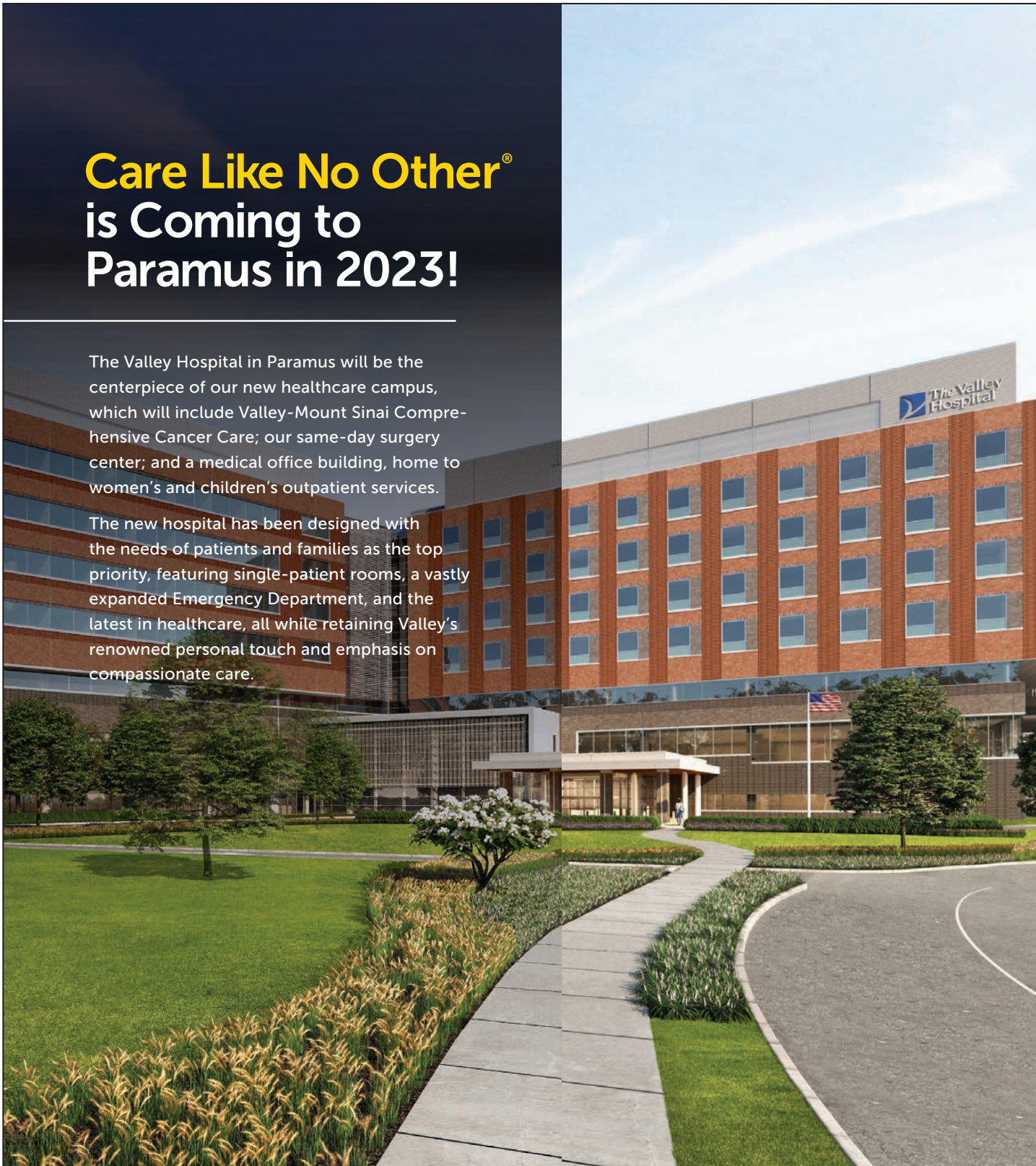
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## Dear RIDGEWOOD LIVING Readers,

When my family moved into our South Irving Street home decades ago, the former homeowner shared something special about our block: the Ridgewood Run passed right in front of our house. We spent that first Memorial Day and many others since cheering on the runners, passing out water, snapping pictures of friends and sometimes even running ourselves. On days when my children and husband ran, I would hightail it over to Vet's Field once they passed our house to watch them make it across the finish line. Sometimes I jogged, often I rode my bike and some years I pushed a stroller. The Ridgewood Run is truly a unique event in our village.

So there was no doubt that running would be a central theme for this May issue. I hope you enjoy reading about the origins of the Ridgewood Run started by Ridgewood residents Toshi and Fred D'Elia, and the North Jersey Masters Running Club that sponsors the run today. Catch up with Paul Goldberg, former resident, long-time runner and occasional winner of the Ridgewood Run and find out more about Racefaster, Ridgewood's own designer, manufacturer and retailer of high-performance running gear.

Then we are excited to introduce you to Chris and Elizabeth Kaplanis who have turned their passion into their life's work by helping others succeed as runners, marathoners, triathlon racers and Ironman participants. I was exhausted just hearing about what they do!

May also brings us into the full swing of spring sports so we will meet up with Ridgewood High School's Head Baseball Coach, Kurt Hommen, and welcome our RHS correspondent, Henry Walsh. We also pay tribute to a May tradition that celebrates women, Mother's Day, as we highlight the women on the board of the Ridgewood YMCA. And in recognition of Better Hearing Month, Dr. Ann Marie Olson offers advice on how to preserve this vital sense.

"It's May. It's May. --- That gorgeous holiday!" Enjoy this wonderful time and I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

*Kathryn Komsa Schmidt*

Content Coordinator

Photo by Janet Joyner, Janet Joyner Photography





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# NORTH JERSEY MASTERS RUNNING CLUB

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We are so excited that the 45th annual Ridgewood Run will take place on Memorial Day, Monday, May 30, 2022. North Jersey Masters Running Club is proud to be the owners, organizers and producers of this legendary and much-loved community event that attracts over 3,000 runners annually and is comprised of a 10K, a national wheelchair 10K for the Kessler Foundation, a 5K, one-mile run and a Fun Run. Whether you are a runner, a spectator, a sponsor at the Vets Field finish line, or just cheering the runners along, there is something for everyone in this event.

North Jersey Masters, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, offers a community for competitive and recreational runners to improve their health, fitness, and athleticism. We've been around since 1976, founded by former Ridgewood resident Toshi D'Elia. Toshi set several world records as a female runner from the '70s through the '90s even though she did not start running till age 40. Her first coach was her daughter, Erica, then captain of the RHS girls' cross country team.

In those days, there was little opportunity for women to run. Toshi and her husband Fred, also a runner, decided to establish an organization near their Ridgewood home where runners could train in a supportive group environment. This became North Jersey Masters. Toshi and Fred were also the creators of the Ridgewood Run.

Throughout her running career, Toshi inspired awe, not only for her achievements but also for her toughness. During a masters 10K championship, she was knocked down but got up, ran on, set a record and, upon visiting the medical tent, was found to have a broken bone in her arm. She was inducted into the USA Track & Field Masters Hall of Fame in 1997 and her life story, both in and out of running, is inspiring.

North Jersey Masters carries on Toshi's tradition of promoting a lifelong love of running by providing knowledge, training and running company for all levels of runners. We offer our members organized runs, coached interval workouts with certified professional coaches, USATF-NJ Team racing opportunities, a popular Beginners Running Program in spring and fall, guest speakers on all things running, student scholarships, volunteer opportunities and so much more. And, of course, by joining, you have access to an instant community of like-minded, friendly athletes. Find out more about our events and membership at [njmasters.com](http://njmasters.com) or email us at [info@njmasters.com](mailto:info@njmasters.com).

Our proceeds benefit many organizations including the NJ Special Olympics, Ridgewood Education Foundation, College Club, Ridgewood Parks and Recreation, the Ridgewood Y, Kessler Wheel Blazers and Girls on the Run. We thank our long-time Ridgewood Run sponsors, Valley Health, the Ridgewood YMCA and the Ridgewood Educational Association as well as our major race sponsors, Ramsey Volvo, The Kessler Foundation and Road Runner Sports. We always welcome new sponsors and volunteers from the Ridgewood community and beyond.

Join us! Being a part of this club has been a life-changing experience for so many of us. You can become a smarter and stronger athlete or maybe even become the athlete you never knew you were! And, no doubt, you will improve your health and gain confidence as you also make lifelong friends.

*Linda Ferraro, a Certified USATF and RRCA Level 2 running coach, is the President of North Jersey Masters Running Club and has been the Volunteer Race Coordinator for the Ridgewood Run for over ten years. She has lived in Ridgewood for over 40 years.*



# The Kaplanis Family

ON THE RUN AND  
RUNNING A BUSINESS

**"No one teaches you how to run. We are just expected to know."**

That observation underlies the mission that Chris and Elizabeth Kaplanis, co-founders of RTA Triathlon, have set for themselves: *We help busy people conquer their big race.* "We coach people for endurance sports like triathlons, marathon runs and Ironman events," says Elizabeth. "We are the only husband-wife team working together full-time as triathlon coaches in the US," adds Chris.

BY KATHRYN SCHMIDT | PROFESSIONAL PHOTOS BY TARYN CARROLL PHOTOGRAPHY



ELIZABETH AND CHRIS IN THEIR TRAINING STUDIO, "THE PAIN CAVE," SURROUNDED BY THE MEDALS THEY HAVE EARNED RACING TOGETHER AS A COUPLE --- NOTE TWO OF EACH MEDAL.

Chris and Elizabeth were not always runners. Growing up in Danbury, Connecticut, Chris was a wrestler and played football. He graduated from Penn State with a double major in finance and economics and began working in finance. That's when running became a competitive outlet for him.

Elizabeth confesses that she was never an athlete as a child in the Poconos of Pennsylvania. Her family moved to Ridgewood when she was a freshman looking for a better school system. Fun Family Fact: Elizabeth's dad started Man Around the House, the home repair service. Her two brothers, also Ridgewood residents, took over and have run the company for the past 20 years.

After graduating from Rutgers,

Elizabeth was inspired to "do something epic." She headed out on a solo tour of national parks. Hiking out of the Grand Canyon one day, she met a triathlete and the sport sounded intriguing to her. She returned to NYC and her first one-mile run around the Central Park Reservoir left her "dying," but she persisted. She blindly emailed Mike Llerandi, Ironman athlete and Ridgewood resident, who responded, mentored and coached her to her first Ironman in Lake Placid: a 2.4-mile swim, 112-mile bike, and 26.2-mile run. She left her job, moved back to Ridgewood into an apartment next to Renato's Pizza and "pounded the pavement" to develop a career in the sport. Her effort led her to be a guest speaker at a triathlon training camp in Lake Placid.

That's when she met Chris who was

training for his first Ironman. "It was total commitment from the start," he says. "That weekend, we went on a 120-mile bike ride and we have been inseparable ever since. We did our first Ironman together one month after we met." They continued traveling to Lake Placid regularly and the car ride gave them plenty of time to talk and share their dreams. Twenty months later, they were married and they celebrated their ten-year anniversary this past February.

Chris had an entrepreneurial instinct so he took the leap, left his job at GE Capital and teamed up with Elizabeth to make the business work. "If you can't take a chance on yourself," he notes, "no one else will." He oversees the business management side of their enterprise while Elizabeth focuses on sales and coaching. Elizabeth shares that it took a lot to follow the dream. "There wasn't a lot of money coming in," she admits. "In those early years, we would have quiet moments asking ourselves 'what do we do?' Then the phone would ring and we would get another client. Organically it just came together."

Twelve years later, they have worked with hundreds of clients including executives, entrepreneurs, professionals and celebrities who have extraordinary goals but limited time. "Most people are not triathletes forever," Elizabeth observes. "They do it for a few years to challenge and dare themselves. You can train on your own, but individuals come to us because it's more efficient to be guided. We focus on each athlete's strengths, work with their schedule and provide a level of accountability. We teach proper form."



THE FAMILY CELEBRATING ELIZABETH'S 40TH BIRTHDAY.

What's it like to work with your spouse? "We are husband and wife, business partners and best friends," Chris responds. "She is good at all the things that I am not. We complement each other though we have different work styles." "What is hard," Elizabeth says, "is managing a business from home with toddlers." So they trade off business and child-rearing responsibilities and rotate roles daily, allowing them both to be involved in their children's lives. It helps that they really enjoy spending time together.

Elizabeth has completed ten Ironman distance races and qualified twice for World Championships in Kona, Hawaii. Chris has completed five Ironmans. This past September, he completed the Half Ironman in Atlantic City, placing 17th of over 1500 participants. "One of my goals was to do the half marathon portion of the race, a 13.1-mile run, in under 90 minutes. I did it in 88 --- after swimming 1.2 miles and biking 56 miles, averaging 23 mph!" The race qualified him for the 2022 World Championship. He also took first place overall in the 2021 Lake Placid Half Marathon.

Chris and Elizabeth share the following pointers for novice runners. Start slow: you don't have to run hard all the time. If you're just getting started, you can run/walk. Listen to your body and don't pressure yourself. Keep notes so you can learn from your mistakes. Nutrition is critical: keep on top of your calories and electrolytes. Hydrate. Have a plan. Finally, don't attempt anything new on race day.

At one point, Elizabeth declares, "But we are regular people too!" They enjoy good wine, bourbon and craft beer, reading and watching Yellowstone, 1883 and Ozark. They are big fans of the Yankees, Giants, Penn State and Big Ten Football and they enjoy Friday Night Lights at RHS. Elizabeth is a member of Ridgewood Moms and a classroom parent at the nursery school their son and daughter attend.

Their children, Ashley, 4, and Cameron, 3, are full of energy and have outgoing personalities. Ashley skied at three-and-a-half and rode a bike without training wheels right after her 4th birthday. She loves to color, craft, and of course, loves princesses, mermaids and unicorns. Cameron thinks he's Spiderman and delights in Paw Patrol. "Our kids often operate in X-games mode," Chris

laughs. "The upside is that they both sleep well." Carlos, 11, a Maltipoo and Ernesto, 6, a Labradoodle, add to the excitement of the household.

Elizabeth remembers her first glimpse of Graydon Pool as a teen. She knew right then that Ridgewood was the place for her. Chris only knew New Jersey from what he saw at the Meadowlands attending Giants games, so he was skeptical about the state. But they committed to a house in 2014 and love everything Ridgewood offers. "If we are away for a weekend and it snows, it's not unusual to come home to a cleared driveway. Neighbors have knit blankets for our kids," says Elizabeth. "It's the little things that are so great. We have a true community here." Especially fun is that their backyard faces Vet's Field. "In the summer, we enjoy weekly concerts at Kasschau while sitting in our yard with a cocktail," Chris says. "We also have the best view of the Ridgewood fireworks!"

Lake Placid is still part of the family tradition and they visit their home-away-from-home at least once a month. Together they've traveled to many national parks and Chris reflects that "you cannot overstate the incredible natural beauty in our own country."

So what's next? "I've achieved everything I have ever wanted in this sport. But I have not done it as a mom," answers Elizabeth. "This past November, I underwent a multi-level spinal fusion with two cages. I'm recovering and Ironman Lake Placid will be my #11. My kids will be at my finish line. That will be the ultimate stamp of athletic achievement and evidence that 'anything is possible'."

CHRIS QUALIFYING FOR THE 2022 HALF IRONMAN WORLD CHAMPION.



Chris concludes, "We are so blessed. We do what we love and it is our purpose to help others. It's about consistently giving your best effort every day, month and year and seeing where that takes you."

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**W**hat are some of your favorite sounds? Ocean waves, children laughing, a favorite song? When was the last time you really appreciated your ability to hear?

Hearing is one of the five senses that many of us take for granted (present company included). Hearing comes easily to some of us, but what if you had to struggle to understand what someone was saying?

As an audiologist, many people come to see me because they have difficulty hearing conversations or have a ringing in their ears. Almost everyone comments about how important it is to hear and how they wish they had protected their hearing at concerts or wore sound protection when mowing the lawn. Others say they used to be able to hear in restaurants but now have difficulty whenever there is any interfering background noise. Many things can affect our hearing and it is essential to take action now to protect and appreciate this vital sense.

### What can you do to ensure you hear well for years to come?

Wear hearing protection in the presence of loud sounds. This includes when you attend concerts, use power tools or yard equipment, watch fireworks, and ride motorcycles, among many other activities.

Have your hearing tested to measure where your hearing is today and establish a baseline. It is important to know if you have normal hearing or if you are starting to develop a hearing loss. As years pass, have your hearing re-checked to monitor and address any additional changes.

If your only difficulty is hearing speech in the presence of noise, then you may benefit from auditory training. This involves listening exercises to improve how your brain processes speech in complex situations.

### What can you do to improve your hearing now?

As stated above, the first step is to have your hearing tested. If a hearing loss is present, an audiologist can explain which speech sounds are more challenging for you to hear.

Hearing aids can help improve your hearing both in quiet spaces as well as background noise environments. There are many different options and technology levels that an audiologist can discuss with you.

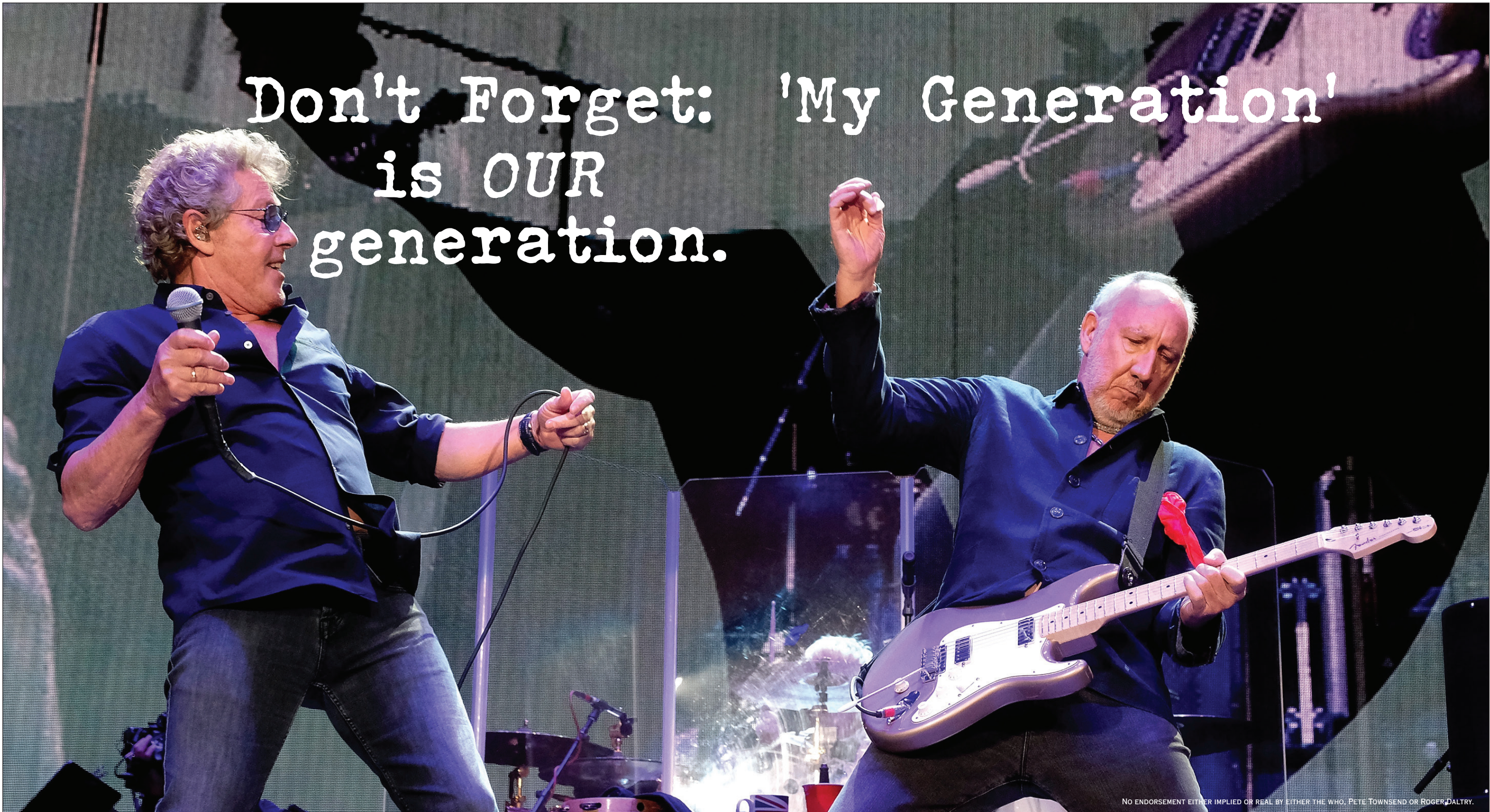
If you currently wear hearing aids but still have difficulty hearing, your hearing aids may need to be readjusted. There is a hearing aid verification test called Real Ear Measurement or REM. This test takes your hearing loss into account and measures how you hear speech with your hearing aids. Your hearing aids can then be readjusted to make sure they are meeting target settings.

Spring is here. Stop and smell the roses and listen to the wonderful sounds around you.

Hear Well,

Dr. Ann Marie Olson

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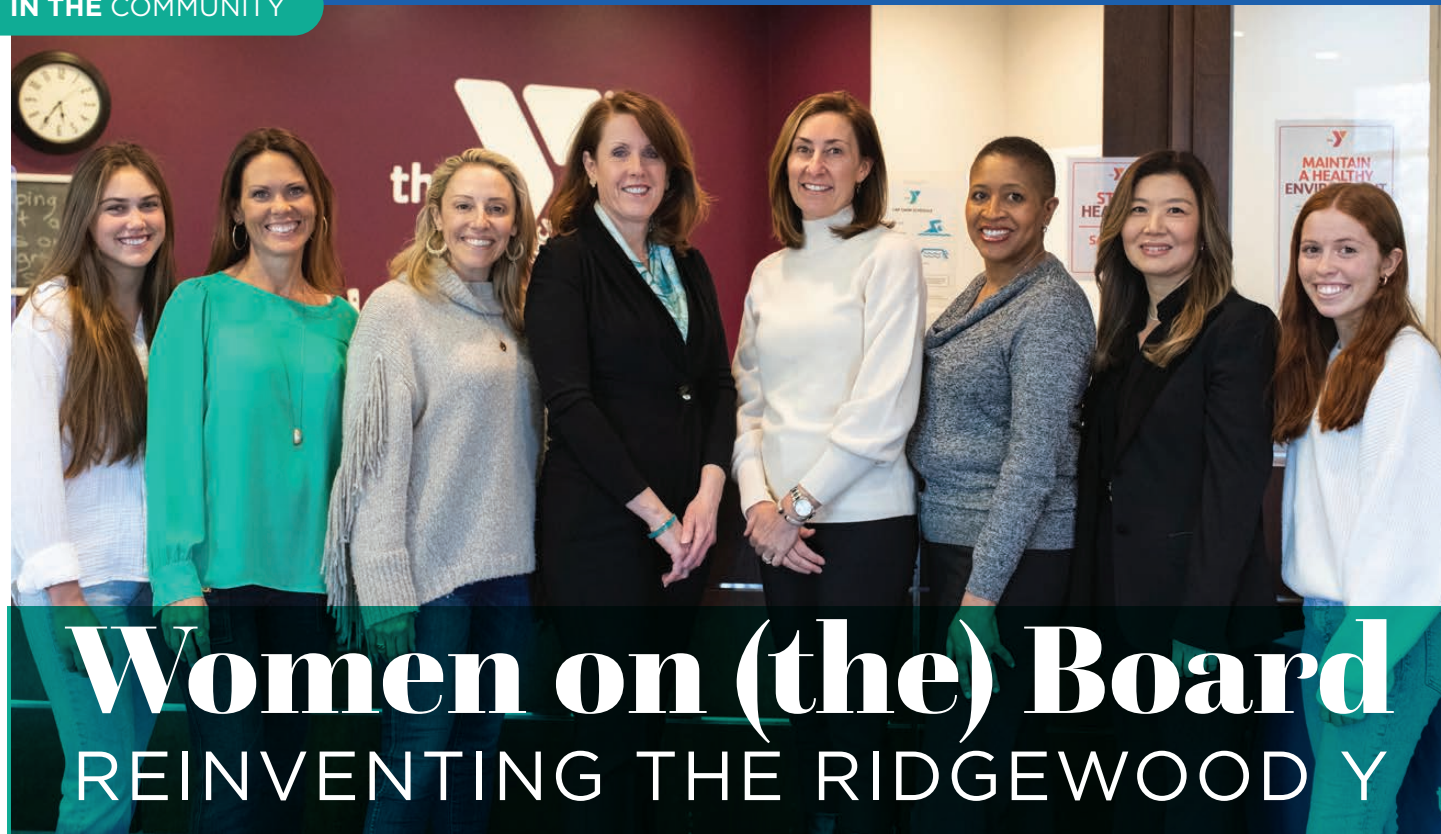
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# Women on (the) Board

## REINVENTING THE RIDGEWOOD Y

COMPILED BY KATHRYN SCHMIDT | PHOTO BY TARYN CARROLL PHOTOGRAPHY

When Ernest Lamour assumed the position of CEO for the Ridgewood YMCA in 2017, the sitting board was looking for change. They empowered Ernie to rethink how to best develop the board including reinvigorating committees, re-arranging responsibilities and bringing in new members. When Ernie looked around the board table he noted that, conspicuously, there were no women. "This wasn't the

result of a strategic decision or policy requirement," he recalls. "It was just the way that business had traditionally been done. But I have four sisters and I know that if you want to go far you have to have women working with you."

The Y serves a diverse constituency from infants to children, youth, adults and seniors. Women show up significantly along that continuum including as mothers and caretakers.

And with women comprising nearly half of the Y's membership, it seemed logical to include their voices in key organizational decisions.

Today, 50% of the Y's board members are women, including three youth board members, and 80% of those women live in Ridgewood. "Our new board members have made us think more strategically and look at everything a little bit closer," notes Anne McDonnell, Senior Vice



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President of Marketing at the Y. "Their presence has opened up a new set of networks, new ways of fundraising, and even new ways of reconfiguring our space," adds Ernie. For example, the Toddler Stay and Play area had

been set up in the basement. "But who wants to take their children down the stairs to an enclosed space?" asks Ernie. Now the space is prominently on the first floor with windows that let in light and allow parents to get a quick

glimpse at any time during their stay.

We asked these successful women, executives, mothers, professionals, daughters, entrepreneurs, aunts and grandmothers to share their thoughts on the Y. Here's what they had to say.

### Shannon Warren, Board Chair

Strategic Advisor and Board Director, SSW Consulting

I so appreciate the examples of our staff and our volunteers who strive to bring joy, kindness and connection to all of our members and our community every single day.

### Juliane Cho

Marketing Coordinator, Riverside Oral Surgery

The Y gives me the platform to carry out my passion to serve the community. I am excited and humbled to be part of a forward-thinking, dynamic group that embraces diversity, development and change.

### Kate Clifford Toomey, 2nd Vice-Chair

Executive Vice President, Wells Fargo

I want to give back to my community which has given my family so much. As a parent, it is wonderful to hear my teenage sons talk about how good it feels to help people and see them energized about giving their time and realizing that they make a difference.

### Kristin O'Keeffe Merrick, Board Secretary

Managing Director, O'Keeffe Financial Partners

No other organization in Ridgewood does the quiet work that the Y does. It feeds families, teaches kids to swim, supports youngsters whose parents are going through a divorce, helps people with Parkinson's, and serves as a place to improve your life.

### Robyn Davis

Attorney, Dunnington Bartholow & Miller

I have been able to deepen my connection to the community through my service on the board of the Ridgewood Y. I am proud to be part of a historic institution that is capable of evolving to meet our community's needs through diverse programs and services.

### Diane B. Kurshan

Retired Physician

The Y is so much more than a gym. It helps residents of Bergen County in so many ways by providing social programs to anyone in need. It gives me hope to know that good exists in this turbulent world.

### Lorelei Grassi

Student, Ridgewood High School

After two years of the pandemic, people my age are suffering. I hope to have an impact on the mental health of my peers. The Y is helping me with an initiative, The Helium Project, to make high schools happier, lighter and less stressful. I could not have done it without them.

### Karen Latimer

Doctor/Wellness Coach, Tips from Town

The Y closely aligns with my personal and professional mission to encourage wellness in mind, body and spirit and foster better health. They embody this at the individual, community and even global level, reinforcing my belief that people with good intentions can make authentic, positive change.

### Meghan Rourke

Student, Northern Highlands Regional High School

I grew up swimming on the Ridgewood Breakers Swim Team. They gave me my absolute best friends and a sport I've come to love and in which I thrive. I plan on swimming in college because of my experience at the Y and I am forever grateful for the friends I made and the skills I learned there.

### Molly Schmidt

Student, Ridgewood High School

The Ridgewood Y makes a difference by helping those in need. For example, we hosted a fundraiser for a former Ridgewood student diagnosed with stage-four sarcoma and raised significant funding to help pay for treatments. It is an honor to be a part of this organization.







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The staff of Racefaster at the Ridgewood Train Station.

Lyndsay and Aidan Walsh in Racefaster original-design running apparel.



# Racefaster

## Ridgewood Homegrown and Growing

BY KATHRYN SCHMIDT PHOTOS BY AIDAN WALSH

What do Melrose, Heights, Rivara, Wyndemere and Doremus have in common? Sure they are all names of streets in Ridgewood, but they are also the names of apparel and sneakers made by Racefaster. Racefaster was started in 2009 by runner Aidan Walsh as a local running coaching company. In 2015, Aidan and his wife, Lyndsay, launched their retail brand on the basement level of another Ridgewood icon, Bookends. Today, Racefaster occupies a flagship storefront at 41 East Ridgewood Avenue, employing management and staff members born and raised in Ridgewood. They also have retail locations in the Garden State Plaza and The Mall at Short Hills.

Racefaster carries high-performance running sneakers including their top-selling "Floatcrest" brand. Their signature suspension foam cushioning system makes this shoe durable and supportive but neither heavy or bulky. Many of their other running shoes feature high-end Racefaster gel insoles as a standard feature. Racefaster also sells running apparel

such as tees, jackets and pants and Aidan and Lindsay are involved in all aspects of designing, manufacturing and importing their products. "We constantly ask ourselves and our customers what they need and what they would like to see in our apparel and then we work backwards from there to develop features, styles, colors, and so on," says Aidan. "We have a rule of uncompromising quality. People who own our products are obsessed with them and are return customers --- for life, we hope!"

Aidan knows a thing or two about running. He has captured five national and eight northeast conference gold medals, several international golds, a full scholarship to Fairleigh Dickinson University, and a fourth-place finish in the Olympic Trials throughout his running career.

Racefaster still holds on to its roots as a coaching organization and offers youth running programs and summer camp at Benjamin Franklin Middle School. "Youth coaching, knowing that we are helping kids develop and enjoy the sport, is probably the most rewarding part of what I do,"

notes Aidan. "There is such a sense of fulfillment when I see them become some of the best collegiate athletes in the country."

Aidan's goal is "to build and create something special: something bigger than us. I realize that sounds cliché, but it's true. My vision is to have Racefaster become a national brand and make Ridgewood proud when residents see our logo. I remember how excited I was when I saw someone wearing Racefaster in Manhattan. I hope that, as we grow, our community will continue to embrace the company and take pride in the brand."

Aidan and Lyndsay recognize and appreciate the support they already receive from Ridgewood including the village administration and Racefaster's loyal customers. They know that their neighbors understand the importance of supporting local businesses and retailers, many of whom are Ridgewood residents. "After all," Aidan says, "the business district is the heart of the community. It takes a village to raise a child but it also takes a village to make that village thrive!"

# Behind the Scenes with Coach Kurt Hommen

BY HENRY WALSH



Throughout his three-decade career, Kurt Hommen, Head Coach for RHS Varsity Baseball, has coached his teams to multiple wins, championships and overall dominance of the Freedom Division League of the big North Conference. This includes capturing the coveted Triple Crown

in 2019 when RHS secured the league, county and state championships.

After graduating from St. Cecelia's High School in Englewood, Coach Hommen played for Ramapo College for four years under Joe Wladyka who he considers his mentor. "Coach Wladyka taught me to value the upside of each player, see their potential, and focus on what they CAN do." Hommen, a 30-year resident of Ridgewood, then made his way to Tenafly where he coached for 20 years before joining the Maroons in 2010. "It felt good to come home," he says warmly.

Like his mentor, Coach Hommen focuses on each individual player looking for their strengths and positive aspects. "Through the years, I've gotten to know lots of kids," he says. "It's important to make each year a good one, including a fun one, and to get the best out of each athlete." He points out that lessons learned in athletics can translate to everyday life, so it is important to him that his players work as hard as possible to be their best both on and off the field; and that they learn to bounce back.

A highlight of his annual practice regimen is the pre-season training week at the Jackie Robinson Training Complex in Vero Beach, Florida. The trip allows players to bond and build relationships and get in several days of warm weather training before the season starts in April. That bonding and camaraderie are essential because baseball is a tough mental game or, as Coach Hommen calls it, "a game of failures. Where else can you fail seven out of ten times and still be considered good? Regardless though, it's a lonely feeling walking off the field after an error."

Sometimes it is not a winning season, like the disappointment of 2016 when the Maroons lost the sectionals to Morristown. But Coach Hommen turned that disappointment into a "springboard" and the team went on to win the sectional finals for three consecutive years, only stopped by the pandemic that curtailed the 2020 season.

Hommen notes that the journey for many of his players begins at a young age. "We have a good feeder program from the Ridgewood Softball and Baseball Association." He has a lot of praise for the parent coaches that teach young players the skills and love of the game.



There are no guarantees that the next play, the next game or the next season will be a win. But to Coach Hommen, "What's important is that you try to be as good as you can. Kids here buy into that in sports and as students." And that is one reason why he is glad to be here, on the Ridgewood team.

Henry Walsh is a freshman at Ridgewood High School.

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f t i p v m d

# CATCHING UP WITH PAUL GOLDBERG

AS TOLD TO KATHRYN SCHMIDT

**Paul, the Ridgewood Run is coming up in a few weeks and I know you were a participant. What was your experience with that event?**

I started running the Ridgewood Run around 1993 and ran the 5K pretty regularly till we left Ridgewood in 2018. My best time was around 18:30. However, I periodically won my age group or placed in the top three. Once I even earned the honor of being the top Ridgewood Resident finisher. I believe that was the year that no high school kids competed and all the fast runners picked the 10K for some reason.

I often “trained” with Andy Zacarro, a really fast runner. He’d pass my house around six in the morning and we’d run to the Duck Pond and up the path to Glen Rock --- always a great way to start the day.

**Any favorite moments you can recall from the races?**

When I raced, I tended to only focus on the jersey of the runner ahead of me. But the Ridgewood Run has to be the best for running past trees in full bloom, beautiful homes and lots of fans on the street. My least favorite moments were always the final stretch downhill, being passed by tiny nine-year-olds.

**How long have you been a runner?**

I started running around 1993 to get in better shape and made the Ridgewood Run a cornerstone of my training. It’s a great way to say goodbye to winter and run a race before it gets too hot.

I am just getting back to running after back surgery a few years ago, so for now, I do mostly short runs as part of my general workouts. But I expect to start running with a group that works out at a beautiful state park nearby. It is very “hilly.”

**What were the reasons you decided to leave Ridgewood?**

My wife, Cathy, and I moved to Santa Monica in 2018 because I had an opportunity to become CIO of a large architectural/engineering/construction

Cathy and Paul with their neighbor Wilshire and his family in Santa Monica.



firm based in Los Angeles. While LA was definitely not on my top places to live at the time, Santa Monica seemed attractive, and I was able to commute to work by bicycle.

**What were some of the reasons that you moved to Ridgewood originally?**

Cathy and I both grew up around NYC but found our way independently to Boston where we lived for over ten years. We then came to Ridgewood in 1987 when I was offered a senior position in my company, based in Montvale. Ridgewood was close to Montvale, looked like a nice community and when we were house hunting, I spotted a music folder from the Ridgewood Symphony on someone’s music stand. So I knew it would be the right place. I play the trumpet.

**The trumpet? Tell us more!**

I started playing the trumpet in 4th grade and have never put it down. I played a lot in college and was good enough to play in any musical group that came along although I was mostly a classical player. In Ridgewood, there were always great opportunities to

perform. I played with the New Jersey Wind Ensemble, formerly known as the Ridgewood Concert Band, and in Jamboree.

A highlight was playing the *Vivaldi Concerto for Two Trumpets* twice and each time with Charlie Schlueter who was then the principal trumpet of the Boston Symphony and a good friend. I was also lucky to perform in Jamboree for a few years side-by-side with Dana Watson, a former Ridgewood resident, who was a professional trumpeter with the Buddy Rich Band. Sitting next to him each night was a lesson.

**What is the rest of your family up to?**

Cathy is enjoying the California vibe and ensuring that Prince, our standard poodle, gets to see his friends regularly. Our daughter, Elizabeth, is an in-demand massage therapist in D.C., and David, our son, is an embedded systems engineer in Boston. He designs location-sensing systems for scooters.

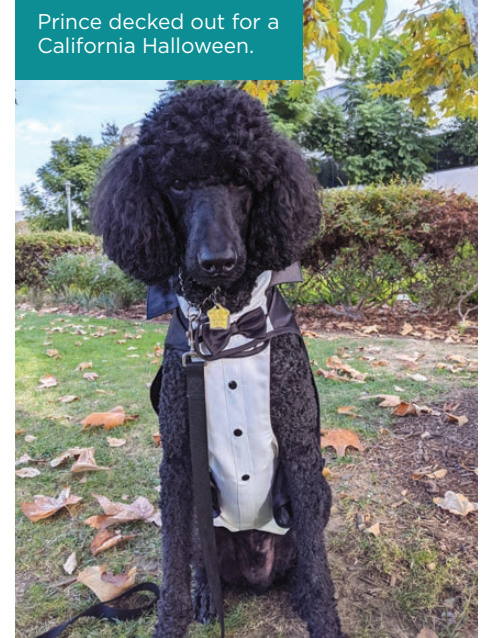
When we decided on our move, we reached out to Elizabeth’s best friend from college who lives in Santa Monica for housing advice. Coincidentally, a



condo unit in her building was available so we took it and became neighbors and friends. They had a two-year-old boy, Wilshire, named after the boulevard, as it happens. We have had the pleasure of helping Wilshire grow up, especially during covid when we all became a pod. He will soon be six and is essentially our “adopted” grand-kid.

**Do you visit Ridgewood and, if so, are there any places you tend to frequent?**

Full disclosure: we still have a house in Ridgewood so we are around every couple of months. Aside from liking Ridgewood itself, the town is convenient to DC, Boston and Lenox, Massachusetts, where we have a



Prince decked out for a California Halloween.

summer home. Wasabi is always a first stop opportunity. And a second...

**So at the end of the day, how do you compare Ridgewood to Santa Monica?**

In Ridgewood, before I would go outside to work out, I would look at the weather. In Santa Monica, I just go outside.

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