



2024 TROY TURKEY TROT STORY IDEAS

1. Personal Trainer Finds His Stride After Losing a Leg

I'm an amputee who live in Clifton Park. I was not a runner until after losing my left leg 10 years ago. After becoming an amputee, I became a full-time personal trainer to help others overcome their physical challenges. Now have my own personal training studio in Clifton Park. I have run numerous local races and complete up to 12 Spartan races a year. This year will be my 4th year doing the Troy Turkey Trot. It has become my favorite way to begin the holiday season. I come down to Troy, run the six miles, love the excitement, then go home and cook Thanksgiving dinner for my family. I'm not a fast runner but run, nevertheless!



Contact: Darryl Partridge, Certified Personal Trainer, Orthopedic Exercise Specialist
SGX Spartan Coach / Adaptive Trainer / <https://leguponfitness.com>
518-225-4853





2. Ten Races, One Goal: A Family's Epic Running Adventure

My name is Vince Granito, and I am signed up to run the Turkey Trot this year. I saw your email and especially the different areas you were looking for story ideas from and I thought you might want to hear our story.



Myself (I live outside of Cleveland, Ohio), my daughter and son-in-law are all running the race this year for the first time. Alyssa Schneider (daughter) and Jacob Schneider (son-in-law) live in Ballston Spa, NY, and are the ones who found the race.

As a family and friend challenge, we are completing a 10-race challenge that we created. Our group is tackling races of various lengths and terrains, including two 5Ks, a 15K, 25K, 5-miler, 10-miler, 20-miler, half marathon, and marathon, both on roads and trails. Jacob and Alyssa have completed their races in New York and nearby states, while others and I have raced in Ohio. The Troy Turkey Trot 10K is our final race to complete the challenge! We even designed a custom race challenge logo using an AI tool to keep us motivated throughout the year. As a psychology professor specializing in sport and exercise psychology, finding creative ways to boost motivation is part of what I do.

The group is made up of myself, daughter, son-in-law, my son {Andrew Granito} (who lives here in Ohio), his girlfriend {Krista Leighty} (she has run most of the races I have run), and two running colleagues from my work here in Ohio {Henry Patterson and Jim Jordan}. We have a total of six, but several others want to get involved next year. Each person chooses whatever races they wanted to complete this challenge, so the fun part was looking up unique races at the different distances. Krista and I, for our marathon distance, ran the Burning River Trail Race that took place in the Cuyahoga Valley National Park in Ohio. The tougher races to find were the 15K and 25K because they are not as popular as some of the other race distances.





One of my 5K races this year was the Avon Lake Eclipse Chaser race. Here in the Cleveland area, we had almost a complete eclipse this past April, so this race is really a once in a lifetime event, because there will not be another total eclipse here again in our lifetime. Jacob and Alyssa ran the Boilermaker 15K in Utica, NY. They chose that race because of the name. They are both graduates of Purdue University (nickname the Boilermakers) and they both marched in the Purdue All-American March Band. The one race we all ran together was the St. Malachi around St. Patrick's Day, which is one of the oldest 5-mile races in the state of Ohio. We also ran the Rock Hall Half Marathon in Cleveland Ohio, which proceeds go to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland Ohio.

The two pictures I have attached are from the St. Malachi race. The one picture is of me and my daughter Alyssa, and the other picture is of me, my daughter, my son-in-law Jacob Schneider, and Krista Leighty.



Contact: Vincent J. Granito, Jr., Ph.D.
Professor, Psychology Department.
Faculty Fellow, AI/Assessment
Teaching and Learning Center
Lorain County Community College
vgranito@lorainccc.edu / 216-570-0476

My daughter's phone is 216-905-4225. Her email is alyssagranito@gmail.com

3. 60 Years of Turkey Trot: The Rogan Family Story

My family has participated every year since the 60's. First it was my father (Tom Rogan) who has to be 60 straight years or so now. Then, I've participated every year since the 70's and now my 4 children participate every year as well. My father was at one time quite competitive in the 10K. He was the HVCC track coach for a few decades. These days he runs the 5K in the Gorilla costume. My oldest, Keira Rogan, runs for Hamilton College and should have a shot at doing well in the 5K this year.

Contact: Paul Rogan / (518) 466-0396 / pdrfox@aol.com





4. After Viral Takedown, Jack Huber Eyes Victory in 2024 Turkey Trot

My son Jack Huber of Bethlehem will be running in the 10K race. Might make a good story if he pulls out the win. You may recall in 2022 Jack was the runner who got tackled at the finish line by a runner he was passing. TTT Event Director George Regan saw the viral videos and disqualified the other runner. Jack was awarded 4th place, and the story made the news.

-WTEN

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MfJ7eP-_iLc

-WNYT

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FHG0oQtaFUA>

-Times Union

<https://www.timesunion.com/sports/article/Runner-disqualified-after-collision-at-Troy-17611267.php>

On Sunday, Jack came in third in the Stockadeathon, the fastest local runner. He ran a PR and he's feeling good about his chances at the fourth Troy Turkey Trot.

Just passing it along in case (hopefully) Jack pulls off a victory. It'll be an inspiring story and a good win for the good guys!

Contact: Michael J Huber, mhuber@albany.edu

5. Giving Kids a Chance to Cross the Finish Line

My name is Marc Mostransky, a.k.a. Mr. Mo, and I am an English/journalism teacher at Troy High School. This is my 12th year at THS, and I've loved every single day. With that said, I was hoping you would be willing to help me continue to foster positive values and a healthy lifestyle for our THS community.

I am forming a team of staff members at our school, and I would like to help some of our high school students run in their first Troy Turkey Trot, which could be the spark for many to begin living a healthier lifestyle.





The help I need is because many of my students live in poverty, and some are homeless. I am saddened yet inspired when I find the time to listen to one of my students and hear all they have already witnessed/experienced. It is enough to break my heart, but I also admire the strength and perseverance at the core of such a human to keep showing up to high school and to keep getting an education despite the negatives the world hurls their way day after day.

I am requesting the registration fee be waived for up to 30 Troy High School students who qualify due to hardship and current difficulties. If we find the need is greater than 30 students, our team of staff members will figure a way to combine our funds to cover additional students.

I understand if this is not possible, but I would be a hypocrite if I didn't try to see if something is possible. I tell my students to voice your wishes, your dreams, your hopes, and your goals. Sometimes they come across someone who shares your vision and passion to improve a community in any way they can.

Contact: Marc Mostransky, English Teacher, Troy High School
[1950 Burdett Ave., Troy NY 12180](#)
(518) 331-5800 / mostranskym@troycsd.org

6. Breaking Barriers: How I Ran My First 5K at 80

My family has run the Troy Turkey Trot for a few years. I never ran in my life until the age of 74. I participated in a Couch to 5K program, not telling my family I was training to run with them. My goal was to be able to run the Turkey Trot at the age of 80. My goal was met when I ran the 2023 Turkey Trot. This was very special to me as I ran by the side of my 17-year-old grandson, who was running his first 5K. I placed first in my age group. My philosophy is to "Never say never," barring health issues. I am registered to run the 2024 Turkey Trot. I live in East Greenbush.

Contact: Diane Bollman-Buyer / diane.artist@gmail.com

7. Reattached, Reborn: Marc's Road to Running Again

My brother Marc D'Amato was in a Motorcycle accident last June and his leg was severed. He has had 18+ surgeries and they were able to reattach his leg. However, they told him he would never be able to run again, wouldn't be able to walk right, and would always walk with a limp. He was released to start attempting to walk again in September with a full leg brace. Now, two months later, he is walking with no limp, brace free and has just entered the 5K Troy Turkey Trot!





Contact: Grace D'Amato gracedamato19@gmail.com / (518)-779-8125.

8. 120 Pounds Down, 10K to Go

I'm excited to share a milestone close to my heart: this year, the Troy Turkey Trot will mark my first-ever 10K—a dream that has been years in the making and a powerful reminder of how transformative hard work, perseverance, and hope can be.

Over the past two years, I've shed 120 pounds and discovered a love for something I once thought impossible: running. That first stride a year and a half ago was full of uncertainty, but since then, running has grown from a struggle to a passion. Three times a week, I lace up for my running class at the gym, each session a step forward in challenging what I believed was possible for myself.

Though I may not be the fastest in the field or even in my age group, I'm committed to finishing—and finishing strong—with my best friend of 43 years by my side. Together, we'll cross the finish line in celebration of resilience, joy, and a friendship that has endured life's many ups and downs. This race represents so much more than fitness; it's the culmination of a hard-fought journey and a testament to what we're capable of, one step, one goal, and one victory at a time.

Contact: Zachary Zeppieri, Subdirector/Assistant Principal
School in the Square (S2), Dos Amigos at School in the Square
108 Cooper Street. New York, NY 10034
Tel. 518.369.7074 / schoolinthesquare.org / zzeppieri@schoolinthesquare.org

9. Racing Toward Love: How Running Brought Us Together

I would love to share how running has changed my life! I met my boyfriend, Dom, a little over a year ago at a Somerville Road Runners club run. There was an instant connection, and we would run together often - it was a great way to get to know each other! About six months after that, to no one from SRR's surprise, we started dating officially. Over the past year, we've cheered each other on at several races, including the New York City Half Marathon, the Chicago Marathon, and the Bay State Half Marathon (photos attached). I'm going home with him this Thanksgiving and the TTT 10K will be the first race we've ever run together. Then we'll cheer on Dom's mom, Nafsika, in the 5K. I couldn't be more excited, and maybe this will be the start of a tradition!

Contact: Sarah Minucci sarah.minucci@gmail.com / (615) 512-3030





10. Discovering Strength Through Running: Alysha's Journey

I'm Lisa, the founder of Ella-Go (www.ella-go.com), a Running Life Coaching program designed specifically for women who are new to running—or new-ish to running. At Ella-Go, we don't just focus on the physical aspect of running; we also address the emotional and mental journey. Our goal is to help women not only start running but also use it as a tool for personal empowerment.

This year, we're excited to share the story of one of our participants, Alysha, who will be running her first-ever 5K.

When Alysha joined our program this summer, she couldn't run for more than 30 seconds and wasn't sure if running was for her. Fast forward to today, and she's not only looking forward to every Saturday's group run with the other women but is also preparing to cross the finish line of her first 5K.

Alysha's transformation—from someone unsure about running to a strong, confident runner—has been truly inspiring.

We believe this journey will empower her in many aspects of her life beyond just running!

Contact: Lisa Delugo
lisa@ella-go.com / 518-209-5571

11. The Dearborn Tradition: 43 Years of Running the 10K

My family, the Dearborn's, have been running in this race since before I was born (43 yrs old). My father (74 yrs old) has run the race almost consistently since the seventies. My sister has run every 10k since she was out of college, as have I except for a few injury-plagued years. There has never been a year since my father's first race way back then that a Dearborn has not run the 10k.

My sister and I ran the grade school mile until middle school, when we switched to the 5k since we were competitive cross-country runners in high school. A friend and I used to put on our rollerblades back in grade school and blade the 10K after the mile, back when it was first on the schedule. All Dearborn's are given a 4-year exemption for the college years (Wednesday night can be a bit too much fun for an early Thursday run!), and then are expected to be back in the lineup after that. The "pressure" is applied, and it is almost impossible to say no.





I have memories of blizzard snow, pouring rain, and freezing cold Thanksgiving mornings when we bundled up, put on a happy face, and suffered through a brutal 10K. It is always all worth it when you get to the Ale House afterwards for a congratulatory pint with friends and family.

Now that I have two children of my own, I am thrilled to be passing the tradition on to a new generation. My six-year-old daughter Grace will be running the mile for the Third time so far, and my 3-year-old daughter Ella says she wants to run as well, so we will see. All in all, the Troy Turkey Trot has been a wonderful tradition in my family for 3 generations now, and I cannot wait for Thanksgiving this year to enjoy it again. Thanks for your time.

Contact: Jack L. Dearborn / 518-281-1642 / jack.dearborn@yahoo.com

12. How a Turkey Trot Brought My Family Closer

Hi! I am Eva Shatynski, and I am in 8th grader at Farnsworth Middle School. I had to write a story about a family tradition for a TedTalk in 7th grade and decided to write about the turkey trot. Here is my story that I used for my TedTalk and decided to share with you!

Bonding as a family during the Turkey Trot all started when I was just 6 years old. My family and I were in the car on the way to the Thanksgiving 5k. My stomach was churning, and my feet were tapping with excitement... and maybe some nerves! When we arrived, it was chilly out and my hands were turned to ice. We lined up on the start line and soon the race began. As we settled into the race, my dad was the fastest with my brother, Ben, not far behind. My mom and I were running towards the back with my sister, Sophia, shortly behind. Soon we reached mile one. I was easily jogging with my mom and sister and was barely out of breath. "Mom," I complained. "You guys are running too slow. Can I go faster and run by myself?" Obviously, my mom said no. I was only 6 after all. Soon, we reached two miles. I was still frustrated and wanted to go faster. But I enjoyed talking and joking with my mom and encouraging my sister to keep going. After we passed the 3-mile line and after some painfully slow running, we could see the finish line in the near distance. "Ok," My mom said. "Now that we can see the finish line, you can run ahead and finish by yourself." "Finally!" I huffed and sprinted away.

Now, believe it or not, my sister (who was the slowest in our family before), is now the fastest and is at Oswego college running Track and Cross Country. Next, is my dad. Then, my brother after him. Both only run a few times a week. Then me. I only run for sports practices. And then my mom is the slowest who only runs once a year (The Turkey Trot) unless she is being chased or running from her car to the house if it is raining.





Even though my whole family runs at different speeds, and we don't run together, we can all cheer each other on and motivate each other. I remember finishing and hearing my dad and brother pushing me to go faster and saying how great I was doing! It felt so good!

So many people struggle with relationships as they grow up. You may drift apart from family. Some people think that drifting apart from family is not that big of a deal if you just stay in touch a little bit. That is not true. It can get very hard to grow up without your family. Even though you may grow up and meet new people, your family will always be your best friends. This is coming from someone with experience! Trust me. Whenever I get into friend problems or other issues, my family members are the first people I can talk to.

As I mentioned before, my sister is in college and is always busy with running. My brother basically is always at basketball training. I am often at sports practice. My dad and mom are busy with their jobs. We barely have any time for each other anymore!

When we make the plans to run the Turkey Trot, we make sure no one schedules something else at this time. The Turkey Trot is family time. Even though my whole family runs at different speeds, we can all cheer each other on and motivate each other. Since we are all growing up and finding our own interests, it is hard to find a time that you can just talk and hang out.

After the race, everyone in my family is in a good mood and we are all just overall happy. Exercising just makes you feel good. My sister is sometimes grumpy and when she finally goes out for a run, she comes home a whole new person! Who is this and where did my sister go? After lacrosse and field hockey games, I come home extremely energized and bouncing off the walls. Before my brother goes to basketball practices or goes into our basement to lift weights, he is moody and cranky. When he comes home or comes back upstairs, he is happy and kind! In the mornings, my dad goes biking or running and my mom goes to workout classes at the gym. Exercising will then make them feel good for the day. Exercising just affects everyone in different but positive ways. This is because exercising releases a chemical called endorphins. It changes how you feel mentally and physically. It also makes you more tired, which helps you get more sleep.

Another helpful thing is now that we ran a 5k, it doesn't feel like a crime to go home and eat lots and lots of food for thanksgiving. On the car ride home, we all laugh and talk about things like, "Did you see that man with the weird hat and the dog dressed as a turkey?" "YES! They both looked so funny!" We just seemed happier! Not only does it affect you, but it will also affect everyone around you. For example, if I am mad and take it out on my sister, she'll be mad. The same goes for being happy. When I am happy, my family feels happy too. It's the best way to spend Thanksgiving! Being happy and grateful for each other. After that run, I didn't realize my family and I could have so much





fun from running a race! When we get home, we just sit on the couch and watch the Macy's day parade while eating Omelets and fruit salad! What a great day!

Contact: ecshatynski@icloud.com

13. One Family, One Goal: Running to Stay Healthy and Connected

It all started, when my brother-in-law started running. Mahmut is a very gifted pathologist and is now a gifted runner. I always admired his running and his discipline with his routine- don't tell him I said this, don't want it to get to his head. - He wakes up way earlier before work, runs, and then goes to work and works till late hours. I told my sister once that he should rest sometimes and do some selfcare. Her response was " Running is his selfcare".

I am a proud aunt to 2 kiddos. My sister had Yusuf then Hifa back-to-back and has struggled to find time to exercise or do anything really without taking care of the kids or the house or work. She is the definition of a supermom. It also didn't help that we come from a family that never really exercised- besides me-. She wears a Hijab and doesn't like to exercise in a gym setting which made her fitness journey protracted. However, early 2024 she started to run and was hooked after that. She started training, ran her first 10k on Sept 21st, then her first 15k on Nov 10th. She signed up for her first 5k which is this Turkey Trot and her first marathon that will take place next year.

With my sister and her husband running, sharing health updates and running updates, our mom decided to pick up running a few months ago.

Despite not going to the gym or running, she has been an avid hiker. She is a leader with the AMC, and loves to walk, but never ran due to concerns of not being able to run with her asthma. When my sister Rezan started running she decided it was time to start running as well. She ran her first 5k with me in Natick the Flutie 5k for Autism, under the Guild's running group. For those who do not know, the Guild provides services for adults with disabilities. Running for them was extra special because my brother Alimcan is also part of the Guild and was there that day to cheer us on. My mom then ran another 5k in Newburyport, she did so well, and I was so proud of her. (Not revealing her age because a lady does not reveal another lady's age, but she is 50+, and picked up running so go mom!)

Ok, now me. I have always struggled with cardio. I can play tennis, I love yoga and barre, I go to the gym but running has been something I lacked in my fitness journey. Partially because I am a smoker-boo I know- and don't have the lung capacity.





So, when my friend Laura suggested in our friend group that we all sign up for a 5k in Boston, I thought it would be fun. I knew I wouldn't be able to run 3 miles non-stop, but I figured it was for a good cause, and with friends so why not right? I was so nervous prior to the run; I only ran maybe a mile at the gym that week and I hadn't had enough sleep the night prior. The race started and I was struggling in the back, trying to catch my breath. But after 1 mile I got in the groove, and realized I loved the aspect of running in a group setting, with people at my pace, others cheering on the sides. I finished before all my other friends and with a pretty nice time despite walking in between. I finally got the running itch.

When I heard, my mom was going to run the Flutie5k, I wanted to run too, but again did not prepare at all, and the hills killed me literally. But being there, hugging my mom at the end felt so special that, when my sister and mom offered to sign me up for the Turkey Trot, I said let's do it!

So now, all 3 of us will get to run a 5k together, my nephew and niece will run the 1-mile run, while my brother will cheer us on on the sidelines. I know I have a long way to go but I feel very grateful that I have a family that pushes me to do healthy activities, a family I can do these healthy activities with and a family that supports each other in their successes. Just really grateful.

Contact: Neslihan Şahinkaya -- nesli.sahinkaya@gmail.com

14. How the Troy Turkey Trot Became Our Family's Thanksgiving Tradition

I started running the Troy Trot when I was in 6th grade, I did the mile run; I am now 43 years old. After that year I ran it every year with dad and my sister if I was in town. When I was in college my older sister, Aubrey Fleszar (married name Schulz), would run beside me. My sister and dad, Mark Fleszar, and sister's husband, Ken Schulz, continued the tradition for all the years since. I moved away for grad school and now live in Colorado. When I come home, I will still run it and my husband, Matt Marshall, now runs it too. Last year was ultra special because we had three generations running, as my nephew did the 5K with us and my niece ran the 1 mile. This year will be tough as my dad's knees won't let him run anymore. Matt and I will change it up this year and run the 10k, while my sister, Ken and nephew run the 5k. While dad is still highly active, he'll be cheering us on from the lines.

Contact: Sara L. Fleszar, Pharm D, BCOP
S26triFleszar@gmail.com / 540-336-6774





15. A New Tradition Amidst Tragedy and Triumph

This year has taken its toll on my family. We lost my mother to dementia/Alzheimer's, in January. Then, on Easter, I suffered a heart attack. In May, my daughter suffered a neck injury during gymnastics and is still recovering. Participating in the Troy Turkey Trot this year is a new tradition for my family, as we are still trying to navigate our "new normal ". If you would like to feature us in a story, I am happy to share so hopefully we can help and inspire others. I am available any weekday after 4 p.m. and all weekend.

Contact: Shay Allen shayshay275@yahoo.com / 518-701-3559

16. The Turkey Trot: A Family Affair Across Three Cities

I love running in the Turkey Trot. I come up from Brooklyn and join my 75-year-old aunt from Rochester and my sister and niece from Albany. This will be my fourth Troy Turkey Trot. We are three generations joining together for the experience, especially the costume contest. We hope to win this year! Feel free to contact me. My aunt Karen is amazing as she's walked/run in hundreds of races in her life.

Contact: Joni Kletter / 917-270-3294



17. Runner Honors Grandfather at the Troy Turkey Trot

I've run most of my adult life but never for any events but was inspired to run the Troy Turkey Trot last year (my first ever 5k) to honor my grandfather (my mother's father) who passed away a month before the race, as he was the first person to encourage me running as a hobby. This is my third race event, first 10k run, and second year running the Trot. I love the trot for all the holiday festivities, setting personal goals for myself, and giving back to the less fortunate. Then I go home for a big vegetarian Thanksgiving spread with my family.

Contact: Jeremy McMillan / jmcmillan1997@yahoo.com





18. **New Generation Joins Turkey Trot Tradition**

My family and I have a simple tradition but have done the same thing every year since our now 8-year-old son was three.

- I run the 10k
- My son runs the 1 mile with my husband
- We gather as a family with a bunch of friends outside Ryan's Wake and cheer on the 5k runners.

This year we are switching it slightly, I'm still doing the 10k, but I'll also be running the 1 mile with my 8-year-old, as he just completed his first season of cross country and really wants to give it his all. My husband will be running with our 5-year-old son. It will be his first Troy Turkey Trot and we're super excited to have our whole family in on the action. The Trot is one of our favorite days of the year and we love kicking off the holiday in our city with a bunch of friends.

Contact: Roz Cardish / roz.cardish@yahoo.com

19. **How a Cold 5K Turned into Our Family's Warmest Thanksgiving Tradition**

I have a compelling story for you around this amazing race that I love so much. It's story of me and my eventual Dad (father-in-law), and how it's connected our family.

I'm an avid runner myself, having ran 20 marathons, qualified for Boston 3 times, ran all three majors in North America and countless other road races for fun over the past 12 years since taking up running as a hobby. I almost certainly tell anyone who asks - that the Troy Turkey Trot is among the best runs anywhere - but also how it has slowly but surely become one of the greatest Thanksgiving traditions for my family in how it's evolved over my time running it - and how the whole family now embraces it over a decade later.

This year will be my 11th consecutive year running the race, and 11th Thanksgiving celebrated with my now wife's family (The Wittemann's). My first year doing it (2014), everyone in the family turned their eyes up at "*Lyndsey's New Boyfriend*" for wanting to do anything except party all night the night before, sleep in late, lounge around all day and eat great food. But I stuck to my intentions and if not anything else, bought myself some fresh air away from possible awkward conversations with my new girlfriend's family and friends and first time at their house. Every holiday is an all-day gathering at the Wittemann House, with a revolving door of people coming in starting at 8am and staying well into the night. My now mother-in-law is also quite generous in letting as many people stay at their house, even if that means people are on the couch and floor. So, coming as the new guy, I had to adapt quick if they were to continue to stay in good graces. It's its own marathon.





Treading lightly on my 'not-so-great' idea of running a freezing cold race early on Thanksgiving morning, I asked around to see if there were any takers on dropping me off and picking me up from Troy, which was only 10 minutes from their home in Latham - hoping to avoid traffic or parking that morning. Mostly everyone punted. Who stepped up to the task? Mr. Wittemann aka 'Pops' said he would do it (not looking too enthusiastic but being the super Dad he is to three successful children; he was quick to take on the task for 'the new guy' probably because he felt sorry for me and my stupid idea). He's a man of few words to start, and an intimidating stature and aura about him - but after one conversation you quickly realize he's a gentle giant with a heart of gold. We didn't say much that morning, except where to meet afterwards (Brueggers for bagels & coffee, of course) and how long it would take. I was running the 5k so as I got out of the car to jog to the start line, I said, "see you in 18 minutes". I would guess less than 20 words.

10 years later, Pops and I will go through our Thanksgiving morning routine once again so I can run my favorite road race in America - The Troy Turkey Trot 🦃.

Afterward: Little did I realize that this simple series of events Thanksgiving morning, year after year, would become such an incredibly special tradition for my now family (Lyndsey and I got married in 2019), and how it's become something everyone looks forward to every single year and some even participate with me! Lyndsey ran the 10k with me one year, while my 9-year-old niece Tallie ran it with me last year (both dressed in Turkey costumes). I also have two boys of my own now (Charlie 3, Jack 4 months) - and I will see that the tradition is passed on for our family and the amazing event!

Contact: Jon Cline
(606) 407-2783
jonathonline@gmail.com

20. Victoria Hostig Marks 15 Years of Turkey Trot with Her Family

Victoria Hostig (formally Baecker). This year for the Turkey Trot I'll be running the 5K with my two older daughters, 16 and 13 and the 1 mile with my 4-year-old! I ran my first Turkey Troy 15 years ago when my oldest was just a year old and now we will run all of us together! So excited to continue the tradition!

Contact: Victoria Hostig / Victoria@blueprintconnects.com / 203-464-4554





21. How a Long-Distance Relationship Led to a Family Turkey Trot Tradition

My name is Rachel Ann, and I wanted to share my family's history with the Turkey Trot! My husband, Nick, and I began dating in 2018 long distance (he lived in Albany, and I lived in North Carolina). I have spent Thanksgiving with his family since that time. My first Thanksgiving in Albany I missed my family, who do a Turkey Trot 5k every Thanksgiving. To ease some homesickness, Nick signed us up for the 2018 Turkey Trot. We have participated every year since (including a virtual race in 2020) and have signed up for this year making it our seventh Turkey Trot! Since our first Turkey Trot Nick and I have now gotten married and it's one of our favorite traditions.

Contact: rachelannniedz@gmail.com / 919-454-1554 / M-F 9-5

22. 59 Years and Counting in the Troy Turkey Trot

I have run every Troy Turkey Trot starting in 1966. This will be my 59th consecutive year (if one counts the snowed out year and the virtual year). I LOVE the tradition. As you might imagine, it has taken some effort to make sure I could make it. I lived locally in Scotia in high school, but then went to college at Yale and my family had moved to Connecticut. However, I came up and stayed with the family of high school friends and continued the tradition. Then I had medical school. Then I had residency training and had to bargain and trade holiday shifts to make sure I had Thanksgiving day off, even if I had to leave the race and work the night. That pattern was so far in my years as a physician, but I have managed to make every one. There are lots of "Turkey Trots" closer to where I now live in Queensbury, but Troy has my heart!

Photo caption: Dan Larson holds his oldest grandson with his daughters and son in law who all came down to the 2015 Troy Turkey Trot, his 50th running!

Contact: Dan Larson: 518-796-4171 / brantlakedan@gmail.com / He is in the 5k. Finished last year in 27:40

23. Running the Turkey Trot for Mom's Memory

My name is Deanna Luneau and this year I will be running the Turkey Trot in memory of my mom, who passed away unexpectedly in April of this year.

In 2022, I decided to start running. As a child, I wasn't naturally athletic. I was incredibly clumsy and always had aches and pains. At 15, I had my first hip surgery, and it left me struggling to walk for years after. The physical and emotional toll was tough on me, but it was also hard on my mom.





Eventually, we learned that the root of my struggles was a genetic condition that my mom, sister, and I share. Doctors told me my joints would continue to deteriorate and running was out of the question. But I refused to accept that.

So when I told my mom I was going to run a 5K, she was stunned. She knew the challenges I faced and asked me constantly about my training, worrying about how my body would hold up. But despite her concerns, she never once told me to stop. Instead, she saved up money to come cheer me on at the race.

When I hit the final stretch of that race, I could hear her voice above the crowd, shouting my name with such enthusiasm that people nearby covered their ears. I crossed the finish line at 42 minutes and 14 seconds and looked over to find her crying tears of joy. It wasn't just a personal victory—it was ours. That moment meant everything to me, and even more to her.

My mom and sister were planning to move to upstate New York, and I had an idea: we would all run or walk the Turkey Trot together - me, my husband, my mom, and my sister. I was determined to make it a new family tradition. I couldn't wait to share the thrill of crossing the finish line of the first race my mom saw me run with them. I imagined us completing the race, cheering each other on, and celebrating together. But life had other plans. Just three weeks after my wedding, my mom suffered a severe stroke and passed away at just 48 years old.

Losing her was devastating. She wasn't just my mom; she was my best friend and my loudest cheerleader. So, running became my outlet. It gave me a way to channel the grief and confusion that came with losing someone so important. With every step, I felt her belief in me and the memory of her cheering me on through every challenge. It reminded me that no matter the obstacles, I had the power to keep moving forward.

After my mom passed, my husband and I decided to adopt my sister. She needed us, and we were ready to be there for her. Having her live with us made it possible to train together as a family. We began running and walking together, supporting one another as we prepared for the Turkey Trot. It became not only a way to stay active but a way to stay connected, to honor the memories of my mom, and to build new ones as a family. I encouraged my sister to sign up for the race, knowing it would help us carry forward the tradition I had hoped to start with our mom.

This year, my sister and I will run the Turkey Trot in memory of our mom. The finish line will be quieter than in 2022, but I know she would be so proud of us. Running has taught me that strength isn't just physical—it's the ability to rise above the hardest moments, to keep moving forward even





when the road feels impossible. This year, as I cross the finish line, I will carry her spirit with me every step of the way. And I'll carry the strength of my family, too, knowing that together, we can face anything.

Contact: Deanna R. Luneau / segreto2259@gmail.com

