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A Brain Tumor Does Not Slow Ironman Quest

By Donna Sprowls

In 2004 while running in the Marine Corp Marathon, Beth Ann Telford felt a pop in her head and later experienced other problems. After a trip to the doctor she was diagnosed with a brain tumor and 10 weeks later had surgery. She had to learn to walk, talk and move all over again. Beth Ann was determined to run again and six weeks later she did!

Beth Ann was diagnosed at 36 and has raised thousands of dollars for brain cancer research. The National Brain Tumor Society recently named a research grant in her honor. A previous member of Trinity she is the daughter of member Bob Telford. Following are excerpts in her own words from a recent Patriot-News article.

"I ran my first 5K through the streets of Camp Hill and started to believe that maybe I could run the Marine Corp Marathon again. By The fall of 2005, I was once again standing at the starting line. I was more determined than ever to fight my own battle and make it to the finish line. I made it through my first post-surgery marathon with the Marine Corps run and began to set my sights on more challenging endeavors. One year after surgery I started training for sprint triathlons. While training I received terrible news, my tumor was growing and required surgery. The doctors reluctantly allowed me to wait until after race season. My second surgery was three days before Christmas 2006. In early summer 2007 I completed Eagleman which only led to bigger challenges.

The thought of an Ironman both thrilled and scared me. The sheer distances and diversity of events placed a whole new meaning on endurance. The beginning of 2008 was filled with early morning swims, long bike rides, runs and everything in between. My doctor was concerned with the length of the endurance event and the stress that would be placed on my body.

At last the morning of the Ironman arrived. Like all difficult journeys, this event would not be easy, as the skies opened up and it started to rain. A little over 14 hours later, through the pouring rain, I was on my last mile ... a very long journey, much longer than just the 140.6 miles. I had run through the hours of pain, uncertainty and fear brought on by my cancer. As I crossed the tape I was told, 'Beth Ann Telford, you are an Ironman' and I knew I would never give up. And I haven't! Since my first Ironman, I've completed in many additional triathlons and races, including finishing my second Lake Placid Ironman and this year winning the first female survivor award at both the Race for Hope 5K in D.C and in Philadelphia sponsored by the National Brain Tumor Society.