How I became a runner

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Runners and roommates Claire Davenport, left, and Antanina Belzer stretch before a long run as they train for the Rock 'n' Roll Marathon and Half-Marathon. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

I listen to my music as it beats along with my feet. The park soars by me, ducks waddling by the pond, the sun shimmering through the hanging Spanish moss. I am on another long run in Audubon Park. Long runs are just one aspect of my training for the Rock 'n' Roll Marathon in New Orleans on Feb. 28.

I have not always been a runner. Before college I could barely run two miles. I began seriously running after I took part in the TIDES (Tulane InterDisciplinary Experience Seminars) running course during my first year at Tulane University. I had never run in a group before, but something clicked.

This year when I decided to train for the Rock 'n' Roll Marathon, my roommate Antanina Belzer helped me train from the start. Antanina, a cross-country runner in high school, is a huge inspiration for me and is one of my biggest supporters. Together we made a training regimen and diet.

"Running the marathon last year was an amazing experience, and I want to support my friends as they run their first full marathon," says Antanina.

Other Tulane students also are inspired to run by friends.

"My friends have inspired me to run because they motivate me even when I have wanted to quit so many times," says Ellie Garrido, a Tulane sophomore.

"I found a running buddy, which I never had in high school. She motivates me and helps inspire me to run," says sophomore Tristan Peonard.

As the Rock 'n' Roll Marathon approaches, I am a little nervous but I know that my friends will all be there cheering me on as I push myself to the limit.

Claire Davenport is a sophomore at Tulane University, majoring in English and political science.

"My favorite thing about running is how it clears my head and lets me feel free from my life for awhile."
Tristan Peonard, sophomore