

Member Special Edition: Jessica Ball's CVR Story

Hi friends, it's me, Jessica Ball — your friend from run club.

I want to tell a love story — about how a sport and a community transformed my life.

It started when I noticed a pair of Hoka Speedgoat 5s on sale under the tent at ORO. I liked that they were purple. At checkout, I made small talk with Patrick, and he invited me to join the CVR Fun Run. The interaction went something like this:

Me: "Sounds fun, but I am not a real runner."

Patrick: "All paces are welcome."

Me: "I have two babies at home. I can't get out in the evenings."

Patrick: "You could bring them if you have a running stroller."

And so, I showed up on a Tuesday evening pushing my older toddler in the stroller. Since the Montpelier Mile was still a fresh memory for my then-2-year-old, I told him that run club was a parade. Thankfully, many fun run participants played along. So it began — every Tuesday, I would bring one or both of my kids to fun run for the workout, camaraderie, and parade.

The following October (2024), I signed up for my first 5K, Leaf Peepers. I remember feeling

imposter syndrome, surrounded by athletic, brightly colored people. That first road race was an aha moment, as I somehow strung together three of the fastest miles of my life, crossing the finish line a good six minutes faster than expected. I clearly had no idea what I was capable of, and from then on, I was hooked.

Over the next year, I kept showing up. Road races, fun runs, winter runs, trail runs, volunteering, cheering from the sidelines, cheering mid-race — of course I loved running, but I quickly learned that my love for the sport and community came in many forms.



Surrounded by the winter fun run crew at the Bear Naked Growler, I registered for my first marathon, the 2026 Vermont City Marathon. Up until that point, I was the running buddy of several friends actively training for the race. With equal parts friendly peer pressure, a relentless drive to succeed, and a life-is-short mentality, I entered my info and hit submit. In that transformative moment, I went from "running buddy" to "teammate".



Over the following months, I intensified my training. I found that long, cold-weather miles went by faster with friends. Coordinating the winter group runs gave me an opportunity to explore new routes and plan for multiple distance options, with my longest WGR run capping at 15 miles. Cue the spring race season. I approached Paul Mailman and the Adamant Half with a fresh mindset — don't suffer, race smart, and have fun! Both races felt easier than the previous year, and both were PR efforts.

Training for the Vermont City Marathon came at a challenging time. I am a parent of two preschoolers, and I work a full-time job with 75% travel. Because my schedule was hectic, I didn't follow a formal

training plan. Instead, I increased my weekly volume, peaking around 55 miles, and divided them across a hodgepodge of short, medium, and longer efforts. There were a lot of hotel treadmills, run club visits in new cities, early mornings on Lake Michigan, and even running circles around a Dave & Buster's parking lot in Tennessee. On marathon day, I was soaked, but happy — and unlike my first race, I felt an overwhelming sense of belonging and purpose.

The other day, my soon-to-be 3-year-old daughter said, "Mom, I really like the kids in your class." She was referring to you — my running companions. Thank you for being so awesome to my kids. Xander and Eliza grew up at CVR runs and events. Many of you have

pushed their stroller, shared snacks, played I-Spy, sang B-I-N-G-O, accepted waters from them at aid stations, and let them feed your dogs 100 treats. They recently crushed it at their first (1K) race!

Thank you for becoming my friends. I started this journey at a vulnerable time: a new mom, new to running, and a flatlander, with very few acquaintances. I immediately felt welcome at CVR and kept showing up. There is so much joy in this community - I love running into you around town, following your training, giving Kudos, and frequent flybys. The other day I was asked if I was the "Mayor of the Co-op?" I replied, "Nope! Just a member of CVR, come run with us!"





In a recent turn of events, our family will be relocating to Rockport, Massachusetts this summer. I love Vermont, the decision was a heartbreaking call - my role based in MA needs me in person. If you want to see a friendly face in the Boston area, run a race, or casual fun run, please reach out to me. I will do my best to visit but want you to know that my door is open. I am forever grateful for the kindness and generosity you have shown me, please stay in touch!