

Fitness buff Kirkness now hopes to join Jean's Marines

Continued from pg. 1

Her sons were shocked to learn that their mother had never won a

trophy in her life before the Ottawa competition because she hadn't participated in organized sport as a youth. Not considered overweight by

any means, the 5-foot-4, 130-pound Kirkness has always been active with her children's sports, formerly serving as vice president of Acton Minor Baseball, a manager on several hockey teams and the creator of the Hockey Moms of Acton calendar in 2000. She previously dabbled in weight training, but stepped up her training to six days a week at 60-90 minutes per session.

Kirkness's latest challenge is to become one of Jean's Marines, a program designed for women who want to train for a marathon over a nine-month period.

Started up in 2002 by Toronto-based physician, author and columnist Dr. Jean Marmoreo, Jean's Marines has just recently established a Stratford chapter of the non-profit program and personal trainer Harris will serve as the coach through her Pathway to Wellness centre in Georgetown beginning this month.

"I saw (Dr. Marmoreo) speak in February just after I had started training for fitness competitions and she was so funny and inspiring that I thought to myself, 'Too bad I'm not training for a marathon instead,'" Kirkness added. "It's great that she's coming here because she's had such a posi-



Judith Kirkness placed second in the Figure Division and third in the Women's Sports Athletic Division at the Neutron Fitness & Sports North Eastern championships in Ottawa. It was her first competition. Submitted photo

tive effect in so many people's lives. A good majority of the women who come to the information sessions say beforehand, 'There's no way I'm running in a marathon, I'm only here because my friend brought me.' Well, not everyone's going to run in a marathon, but at the very least they may get off the couch and start doing something with their physical fitness."

Dr. Marmoreo will speak at the free information session at Georgetown's Mold-Masters SportsPlex on Monday, June 4 from 7:30-8:30 p.m.

The 40-week program is slated to begin in mid-June and involves three sessions of running or walking each week, which includes a group session on a yet-to-be-set night. Dr. Marmoreo will also occasionally drop in on one of the group runs to check up on her charges.

"In the same amount of time it takes for a woman to go through her pregnancy, that's how long it will take a Jean's Marine to train to be ready for a 42-kilometre marathon," said Kirkness. "You gradually build up your skills and your endurance and one of the goals to start is to run or walk a half-marathon. I can't wait to get started."

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