





BALANCE & COMMITMENT: THE AMAZING KRISTINA PINTO

Before co-authoring “Fit and Healthy Pregnancy,” running 11 full marathons, juggling a career and motherhood, serving as a personal running coach, and earning a doctorate in education at Harvard University, Kristina Pinto ’95 learned to write — and write well — as a *Survivor at Harrisburg Academy.

“The writing experience and the encouragement I received at the Academy, starting in Kindergarten, was huge,” Pinto said. “I felt like when I went to college, I was so prepared to write papers... and with a level of expertise my peers did not have.”

Pinto earned a bachelor’s degree in psychology and women’s studies from Goucher College and continued her education at Harvard University, earning a master’s degree and a doctorate in human development and psychology. She spent years lecturing at the collegiate level, writing about and researching physical and mental health; but what turned her into a runner was an epiphany when attending the Pittsburgh Marathon as a spectator in 1999.

“You never know what your body’s capable of until you take it to that level... and when you do this, you realize that you can do it!” she said. Although an athlete her entire life — Pinto played tennis at the Academy and danced through the collegiate level — this experience in Pittsburgh inspired her to train for and run her first full marathon, the Anthem Richmond Marathon, three years later.

But Pinto’s true life-changing experience came after her son, Henry, was born in 2004. Pinto realized that to be the mother she wanted to be, she needed to better balance her life with a personal commitment to her own health and sports ambitions.

“After the Pittsburgh and Richmond Marathons, and then the birth of my son, I was inspired to train harder and smarter. I spent a lot of years running in marathons across the United States, training really hard to get faster, and ultimately, working to qualify for the Boston Marathon [which she did twice].”

Although an article contributor to a number of periodicals and web-based publications, Pinto’s first full book, “Fit and Healthy Pregnancy” was published in June to strong reviews. The book is a marriage, of sorts, of the emphases of Pinto’s life to this point — an aptitude for writing

and research, a love of physical fitness, and a commitment to personal balance that lets her be the best mother she can be for her son.

“Fit and Healthy Pregnancy” is a beginning-to-end pregnancy guide for active women or anyone looking to launch a fitness program during pregnancy. It attempts to help everyone — from novice fitness enthusiasts to experienced athletes — safely navigate pregnancy while maintaining a balanced training program that serves the participant in mind and body. The book intends to empower readers with a variety of workouts and strength-building exercises to stay physically fit and psychologically calm during the first three trimesters of pregnancy and the “fourth trimester,” otherwise known as the first three months after a baby is born.

“I didn’t want to write a book just to write a book, but to provide information that was useful,” Pinto said. “There are lots of books about exercise and pregnancy — but I wanted to write a ‘smart’ book that was accessible and interesting while based in the most current research. I also wanted to show the importance of the mind-body connection during this journey. Women don’t have to be afraid of vigorous exercise during pregnancy; they just have to do it intelligently.”

“Beyond fitness, the book has a lot of science and nutrition in it,” she said, “and I learned how to bridge different subjects in my writing and bring them together across different disciplines during my years at Harrisburg Academy.”

The greater idea of learning to achieve a healthy personal balance starts at an early age, Pinto said, and she appreciates the advantages of an intimate school setting. “The Academy is very community- and family-oriented. Parents are very involved, they know the teachers well, and this becomes an important bridge between home life and school life that teaches a child early on how to face rigor while at the same time, maintain personal balance.”

**Survivors are students who have attended the Academy from Kindergarten through 12th grade. Pinto attended Goucher College for her senior year of high school, but the Academy still considers her to be a Survivor.*

TOP LEFT: The Bolton Kids Trail Race in Bolton, Mass. on Nov. 3, 2013.

TOP RIGHT: Kristina Pinto ’95 and her son, Henry, at the Run for the Hills 5K in Harvard, Mass. on Sept. 8, 2013.

