

DEBORAH DE LAU-MCKENZIE

My name is **Deborah de Lau-McKenzie**, a mother to 3 amazing human beings, a fighter and a businesswoman. I originated from Jamaica but have been living for 30 years in Curacao. Curacao is my home and I love living here.



Twenty-Four years ago, when my second daughter was a year old, I realized that I wasn't magically losing the weight as quickly as I did with my first daughter. While driving home from work as I was passing the area of Corridor, I noticed a group of people running alongside the road. I thought it was a great idea since I have a 9 to 5 job, babies to take care of and no set time to go to the gym. I could run at night, mornings or whenever time permits.

After doing some investigation as to who all those people were, I was told that they were from the Road Runners Club Curacao and I could join their group every Thursday and that's exactly what I did. Then my love affair with running started, 24 years ago! I became a member of the Road Runners Club Curacao.

It was one of the best decisions I ever made. I discovered my love for running (because I have never done it before). It is an unbelievable feeling. Freedom, a sense of peace and utter joy! This is what I felt while running. I discovered strength and endurance that I never knew I possessed. All came out during my trainings with the Club. So many gifted trainers have helped sharpened not only our bodies but our minds.

I looked forward to the training days on Tuesdays, but the Thursday training was the bomb for me. These were very intense but ever so rewarding. The happy hour after the training was never to be missed. There was always a birthday to celebrate because we had so many members. The ever-present Amstel, Heineken,

sprite and coke, chips and my sausage rolls and mouthwatering treats from the baker. These were the highlight and rewards after a hard training.

We had various trainers over the years that worked very hard to keep the high level of the trainings and they helped the members achieved lots of personal best during competitions. Herman Couperus was my favorite trainer by far. He helped me immensely with my training especially while I was training for the New York Marathon. He even made sure I was breathing the correct way. He was very attentive and worked hard to get the most out of the person he was training. My personal best for the marathon was 4 hours, 10k was 50 minutes, 12k and hour and 5k 25 minutes. Great achievement for someone who started running for the first time at 30 years old.

My best memories of the Road Runners Club are the Thursday trainings, the happy hour afterwards, the talks and jokes during the happy hour. We all loved being together and nobody was in a rush to go home. This was the same feeling after our competitions. These were well organized with trophies, medals, t-shirts, juices and not to forget our famous soup. We were like one big happy family.

Unfortunately, my husband passed away almost 10 years ago in November and he was, along with my children, my biggest cheerleader. He was present at all my races and some trainings

to cheer me on. Since his death I haven't been active in the Club. I had to prioritize my time to the children and the business.

Now I am climbing my way back. I am now training 3 times per week and am looking forward to my first race in the Road Runners Club once this pandemic is over.