



# **Press Coverage 2015-2016**

# THE EAST HAMPTON STAR

SHINES FOR ALL

July 21, 2016



Sixty i-tri girls, who had been trained by Sharon McCobb, Diane O'Donnell, Amanda Foscolo, Angelika Cruz, and Anne Welker, took part in the Hamptons Youth Triathlon at Long Beach in Noyac last Thursday evening.

*Craig Macnaughton*

## East End middle school girls compete in a Long Island triathlon

By **Beth Whitehouse** | July 20, 2016

Close to 70 girls biked, swam and ran their way through the Hamptons Youth Triathlon in Sag Harbor last week as members of I-tri, an empowerment program for middle school girls in which the triathlon is a metaphor for life: Showing girls they can do it teaches them they can accomplish any goal, say the organizer and the participants.

The girls in the free program are chosen by guidance counselors or social workers in the four participating school districts — Montauk, Sag Harbor, Southampton and Springs — because “they could benefit from being part of something special,” says I-tri executive director Theresa Roden, 48, of Springs.

“It really helped me,” says Kimberly Bermeo, 12 of East Hampton, who struggled through months of sixth grade this year without her mother, who was in Ecuador for surgery and recovery. “When I needed a shoulder to cry on, they were there.”

I-tri is in its seventh year, and in 2017 is adding the East Hampton and William Floyd school districts. “We started with eight girls at one school,” Roden says. “Those girls graduated high school this year. Every single one of them is going on to further education, whether at Suffolk Community College or a four-year school.”

Some of the girls didn’t know how to ride a bicycle when they started, and some didn’t know how to swim, Roden says. Most hated running, she jokes. From February to July, the girls attended sessions on self-esteem and trained in preparation for the July 14 event at Long Beach in Sag Harbor, formally known as Foster Memorial Beach. Their triathlon entailed a 300-yard open-water swim, seven-mile bike ride and a 1-1/2-mile run.

Says I-tri alumna Abby Hallock, 13, of Sag Harbor, of joining I-tri in sixth grade: “I wasn’t in a great place because I had been bullied a lot. I felt like there wasn’t really anything I could do to make me happy again. Everyone was really encouraging each other and pushing each other to do better.”

During her first triathlon, for instance, when Abby saw another girl fall off her bicycle, she stopped and stayed with her until help came, even though it hurt her own finish time. “That’s what an I-tri girl does,” she says.



## Youth Excel and i-tri Shines at Hamptons Youth Triathlon

By **Gavin Menu** | July 20, 2016



A pair of 13-year-old, soon-to-be eighth graders stole the show Thursday, July 14, at Long Beach in the second annual Hamptons Youth Triathlon, in which nearly 100 children under the age of 16 competed, including 65 girls from the i-tri program, which helps build confidence and self-esteem through training for the event.

Tyler Pawlowski, 13, was the first overall finisher with a time of 41:48, overtaking Southampton's Maggie Purcell during the 1.5-mile run. Purcell, 15, an elite-level swimmer with the East Hampton YMCA Hurricanes program, finished second in 42:39 and led after both the swim and bike portion of the race.

Keegan Guyer (43:48), Isabella Tarbet (44:40), Hadley Clayton (45:38), Caelan Clayton (47:02), Evie Purcell (48:07), Hank Sweeney (48:21), Craig Sheehan (48:55) and Olivia Duca (49:15) rounded out the top 10. Complete results are available at [just-in-time-racing.com](http://just-in-time-racing.com).

Jessica Guallpa, 14, was the first i-tri girl to finish the race with a time of 49:45, good for 12th place overall. This was her second triathlon, having competed last year, and said after the race that she had made great improvement over the last 12 months

"I biked faster," said Guallpa, a rising Montauk eighth-grader who also plays soccer, volleyball, and basketball. "I really like i-tri. Ever since I was in i-tri I met new friends. It helps me be positive."

For Pawlowski, last week's triathlon was not even on the radar until the morning of the event.

"Earlier today my dad said, 'Hey Tyler, there's a triathlon today, you want to do it?'" And that's the whole story," said Pawlowski, who attends private school in Hicksville and, like Purcell and many of the other top athletes who competed last Thursday, is a member of a swim club. "[The course] was challenging, but it's all about keeping a good state of mind."

Theresa Roden, i-tri's founder who started the program in 2010 with just five girls, said all 65 girls in the program this year finished the race last Thursday. She estimated that 45 of the girls competed in a triathlon for the first time.

"Every single one of them did phenomenal," said Roden. "They've been training for this since the end of February. They train mind, body and spirit. We had five or six girls who came to us who were unable to ride a bike. We had a young girl, a sixth grader, she was not a swimmer at all. When you think about how far some of these kids have come and the personal fears they've had to overcome, it's something they will keep with them forever."

## Pawlowski Wins Hamptons Youth Triathlon

By **Cailin Riley** | July 19, 2016

The first time was a charm for 13-year-old Tyler Pawlowski in the second annual Hamptons Youth Triathlon in Sag Harbor on July 14.

The Nassau County resident overtook Southampton's Maggie Purcell during the 1.5-mile run, after trailing her during the 300-yard swim and seven-mile bike portion of the race to win with a time of 41:48. Purcell was second in 42:39, followed by Keegan Guyer (43:48), Isabella Tarbet (44:40), Hadley Clayton (45:38), Caelan Clayton (47:02), Evie Purcell (48:07), Hank Sweeney (48:21), Craig Sheehan (48:55) and Olivia Duca (49:15).

Not only was it Pawlowski's first time in the Hamptons Youth Triathlon, but it also marked his first ever effort in a triathlon. After the race, Pawlowski said that he and his father decided on somewhat of a whim that day to make the trek out to Sag Harbor to compete, although he did add that he had discussed with his father the possibility of doing a triathlon and that they'd recently been researching youth triathlons.

The rising eighth-grader said he enjoyed the course, despite encountering some adversity: the chain on his bike fell off during the bike portion and he had to stop to put it back on before he could finish. Despite that, he still managed to beat Purcell, a talented athlete who attends Southampton High School and is a standout swimmer, having qualified for states while swimming independently for her school, which does not have its own varsity swim team. She's also qualified several times for YMCA Nationals with her club swim team, the East Hampton Hurricanes, and is a member of the track and field team at Southampton, along with her young sister, Evie Purcell.

The triathlon is also a showcase each year for the I-Tri girls, and is the premier event for the program, which promotes confidence and self-esteem for young girls through various initiatives, including a several weeks long training regimen for the triathlon. The program began in Springs and has since expanded to include middle-school aged girls in Montauk, Pierston, Southampton, with plans to expand into East Hampton Middle School and the William Floyd school district. A total of 65 girls from the program competed in the triathlon this year, many of whom had little or no experience with any of the aspects of triathlon competition prior to joining.

Montauk resident Jessica Gualpa, a rising eighth-grader, was the first I-Tri girl to finish on Thursday, taking 12th overall in 49:45. It was her second year competing in the triathlon, and she said afterward she saw significant improvement. Gualpa served as a mentor this year for some of the newer I-Tri girls.

"I think I biked faster this time," she said. Gualpa, who also plays soccer, volleyball and basketball, said I-Tri has been great for her.

"I really like I-Tri," she said. "Ever since I was in I-Tri, I met new friends and it's really helped me be positive a lot."

Theresa Roden, the founder of I-Tri, was proud of the efforts of all the program's participants.

"This was our largest group of girls to date, and they all did an amazing job," she said. "Many were non-swimmers at the start of the program and yet each of them swam 300 yards. We had five girls who were unable to ride a bike at the start and each of them successfully completed the bike course, and each of the girls ran her heart out to the finish."

Tyler Pawlowski of Nassau County won the Hamptons Youth Triathlon in what was his first-ever attempt at a triathlon. CAILIN RILEY





## i-tri Hosting Hamptons Youth Triathlon

By **Abby Cummings** | July 6, 2016

On Thursday, July 14th, one of Long Island's few youth triathlons will be taking place at one of the Hamptons' most pristine bay beaches, Long Beach in Sag Harbor. This youth distance triathlon is designed specifically with safety in mind, and challenges youth ages from 10 to 17.

The Hamptons Youth Triathlon is one of the only youth triathlons on Long Island that features an open water swim (in crystal clear, shallow waters). The bike route will take riders on a mostly flat course on wide roads with designated bike lanes, and the run is down-and-back on a closed course; and the best part is that the race starts at 5:30 p.m., so you do not have to wake up at the crack of dawn.

Theresa Roden founded i-tri in 2010. She has a degree and background in education and first-hand knowledge of what it means to be an adolescent girl struggling with physical fitness and low self esteem. Roden was inspired by her own experience of the realization of the benefits of visualization, nutritional and active lifestyle that the sport of triathlon gave her in her 30's. With i-tri, she wanted to see if she could teach these invaluable life lessons to adolescent girls, increasing their self-esteem and fitness levels.

"I just realized that if I could have had this experience when I was 12, I would have been a different more confident woman," said Theresa. "It has been the greatest privilege of my life to be able to do the work I do with the i-tri girls over the years. Girls who would never consider themselves to be athletes, girls who are afraid to get into the deep end of the pool, girls who can not ride a bike, girls who are dealing with incredibly difficult personal situations put their trust in us when we tell

them that if they promise to "show up" we promise that they will be able to complete a triathlon- and they DO!!!"

The i-tri team for adolescent girls will be one of the many teams participating in the youth triathlon. Along with coordinating the triathlon, i-tri is the beneficiary of all funds raised from the race. Participants and their families are required to make a significant commitment of time to be a part of i-tri. The six-month program includes weekly group lessons focused on self-esteem building and leadership skills, as well as hands-on nutrition education, after-school fitness activities and triathlon-specific training.

i-tri's goal is to teach the girls that they are capable strong and worthy. Through the program's rich and comprehensive approach, the girls discover that its not only about getting to the finish line, but what you learn and who you become along the way.

Racers should arrive no later than 5 p.m. on the day of the race. Registration opens on-site at 4:30 p.m., when racers will pick up their swim caps, race number and t-shirt at the registration tables. Participants must provide their own goggles, towel, bike, helmet, socks and sneakers.

The Hamptons Youth Triathlon includes a 300 yard swim, 7 mile bike and 1.5 mile run.

## *They More Than Tried*

The fitness level and high spirits of the teenage I-Tri girls were evident

By Jack Graves | July 23, 2015

The rain held off and the competitors, including 60 I-Tri girls and members of the East Hampton Y.M.C.A.'s youth swim team, the Hurricanes, as well as many spectators, turned out for I-Tri's youth triathlon at Long Beach in Noyac on July 15.

There were almost 100 in the three-part athletic test, in which the fitness level and high spirits of the teenage I-Tri (Transformation Through Triathlon) girls were evident.

Though the Long Beach course has been the scene of adult triathlons since 1982, this was the first time it had been used by I-Tri. The program's founder, Theresa Roden, who was there urging her charges on, said later in the week that having the youth triathlon there (rather than at Maidstone Park in Springs, where it has been held) would allow it to grow.

Sharon McCobb, the race director, said that she, too, liked "the centrally located venue. We had a lot of new participants this year. Over all, it went very well."

"This was our biggest and best-trained I-Tri group," Roden said. The credit for which, she added, ought to go the girls' coaches, McCobb, Amanda Foscolo, Diane O'Donnell, and Angelika Cruz, who had overseen practices on the course in the month leading up to the race.

In addition to those coaches, four I-Tri alums, Noelly Martinez, Kaya Mulligan, Alana Ellis, and Maria Chavez, helped out on the 15th.

Chasen Dubs, who turned 14 recently, won it pretty much going away in 38 minutes and 23.90 seconds. The bay swim was 300 yards, the bike leg, to the Shelter Island ferry landing and back on North Haven, 7 miles, and the run was a mile and a half.

Dubs, a national Ironguard champion who will be a freshman at East Hampton High School this fall — he swam on the varsity this past winter as an eighth grader and did very well — said after the

race that he plans to do cross-country in the fall, swim in the winter, and run the 100, 200, and 400-meter races with the boys track team in the spring.

The female winner, a Hurricane teammate of Dubs's — and fourth over all — was Maggie Purcell of Southampton, in 41:44.68. Her younger sister, Evie, came to grief on the bike leg, breaking her collarbone as the result of a mini pileup that also downed Caroline Oakland, who also could have expected to be among the front-runners.

Another contestant in the top group, Sophia Swanson, in "trying to avoid something," ran off the bike course and into a tree, McCobb said.

"These were the first injuries we've had in six years . . . I'm still trying to find out what exactly happened," said McCobb. "Sophia kept going, but didn't do the run. Evie was taken [by the Sag Harbor ambulance] to the hospital's emergency room, where she was treated and released. Caroline didn't go to the hospital."

Sophia's older sister, Isabella, who was the runner-up to Maggie Purcell in both the I-Tri and sprint triathlons, said at the Montauk Lighthouse Sunday morning that her sister, a spectator that day, was fine. Oakland, who also was a spectator, sprained her right wrist.

McCobb added that she'd been training all of the above so that they could take part in the sprint triathlon, whose distances were a half-mile swim, a 14-mile bike, and a 5K trail run.

The top I-Tri finisher at the youth triathlon was Goldie Sullivan, 12, in 47:36.84. She was 15th over all.



"This was our biggest and best-trained I-Tri group," the empowerment program's founder, Theresa Roden, said.

The top 10 comprised Dubs, Ben Horton (40:15.66), Ryan Bahel (41:22.34), Purcell, Swanson (42:26.66), George Carr-Smith (43:06.34), Isabella Tarbet (43:09.36), Alden Powers (43:14.20), Christopher Downs (44:50.40), and Caelan Clayton (45:37.84).

The age-group winners were Isaiah Robins and Alyssa Benton, 10-and-under; Keegan Guyer and Powers, 11-to-12; Carr-Smith and Hadley Clayton, 13-to-14, and Downs and Rosemary Carr-Smith, 15-and-over.

Among the youth triathlon's sponsors, said Roden, were the Hampton Jitney, which, "for three weeks provided our girls with transportation to our training sessions at the course," and Units 2 Go, of the North Fork, "which provided us with two storage bins so we could keep our bikes there."



I-Tri, as seen above, provides a support system in sport, as well as in other areas of life.

# The Sag Harbor Express

## Sag Harbor Hosts Inaugural Hamptons Youth Triathlon

By Gavin Menu | July 22, 2015



A group talk took place prior to the swimming leg during the inaugural Hamptons Youth Triathlon at Long Beach on Wednesday.

More than 80 young triathletes, many hailing from the i-tri program that seeks to build self-esteem among adolescent girls, completed the inaugural Hamptons Youth Triathlon at Long Beach in Sag Harbor last Wednesday.

Participants in the event, which included a 300-yard swim, 7-mile bike and 1.5-mile run, included children as young as 12 who just recently learned to swim and bike competing alongside some of the area's most elite young athletes.

Chasen Dubs, a 14 year-old soon-to-be freshman at East Hampton High School, was the overall winner with a time of 34:23.90. Dubs, a top swimmer with the local YMCA East Hampton Hurricanes swim program who also plans to run track and cross country, pulled away from the pack on the run portion, which was self-contained in the parking lot at Long Beach.

Ben Horton, 16, finished second overall in 40:15.66, while Ryan Bahel, 14, was third in 41:22.34.

Maggie Purcell, 14, another strong presence in the local swim scene, was the top overall female finisher with a time of 41:44.68. Isabella Swanson, 15, was second among females in 42:26.66, while

Isabella Tarbet, 12, was third in 43:09.36.

"I think it went really well for our first time out," said Theresa Roden, who leads the i-tri program and helped organize Saturday's event. "It's a venue we wanted to move to for years. The town board really understood what it was all about and we couldn't be happier."

Southampton Town Supervisor Anna Throne-Holst spoke before the start and said the town generally gets inundated with requests to use town property for various events or to close down roads.

"Theresa came to talk to me about this quite some time ago," Throne-Holst said. "Lots of people talk to us at Town Hall and say 'Can you please let us use your facilities, can you please close down the roads, can you have your cops come out and make sure we can do this.' And it's a pretty big deal to do it. This was one [event] the whole town board wanted to do."

With competitors ranging in age from 10 to 16, organizers said safety was their top priority. The swim was a relatively short distance, with a course set no more than 30 yards off the beach. The run was self-contained in the Long Beach parking lot, while the bike portion was held entirely in bike lanes on a course to the South

Ferry and back.

Still, the race was not without incident. Three competitors crashed during the bike portion of the event and two were taken to Southampton Hospital with minor injuries. Roden on Tuesday reported that everyone was doing fine.

“In any event like this, accidents happen,” Roden said. “And we had such great support, the Sag Harbor Ambulance was right there.”

“It’s very important that people in the community see kids on bicycles,” she continued. “We’re growing a generation that’s fearful of kids going out on bikes. In Southampton Town they have these great bike lanes, and East Hampton should take a look at that as well.”

Roden said there were a handful of girls in the i-tri program who could not swim or bike not that long ago, but learned to do both in anticipation of last week’s event. Seeing them complete the race alongside some of the area’s best young athletes, she added, was a proud moment for everyone at i-tri.

All of our coaches agree this year was our biggest challenge,” Roden said. “We’ve had the most kids we’ve ever had. Twelve of the girls were non-swimmers, and there were five girls who could not ride a bike. These girls overcame so much to get to that finish line. It’s an accomplishment that can never be taken away from them.”



Chasen Dubs of East Hampton was the overall winner of the Hamptons Youth Triathlon.

## New Venue, Same Spirit For Youth Triathlon

By **Cailin Riley** | July 20, 2015

Close to 100 children participated in the inaugural Hamptons Youth Triathlon at Long Beach in Sag Harbor on July 15, representing a cross section of East End communities and a wide range of ability levels in completing the 300-yard bay swim, seven-mile bike ride and 1.5-mile run.

Chasen Dubs, 14, broke the tape in 38:23 to finish first and was followed by Ben Horton, 16, in 40:15 and Ryan Bahel, 14, who finished third in 41:22. They were followed by: Maggie Purcell, 14, (41:44); Isabella Swanson, 15, (42:26); George Carr-Smith, 14, (43:06); Isabella Tarbet, 12, (43:09); Alden Ehms, 12, (43:14); Christopher Downs, 16, (44:50); and Caelan Clayton, 11, who rounded out the top 10 in 45:37. Complete results are available at [www.just-in-time-racing.com](http://www.just-in-time-racing.com).

While the race is open to all children age 10 to 16, it is the signature event for the i-tri program, which promotes healthy body im-

ages and self-esteem for middle-school girls through a curriculum of physical fitness, family outreach, nutrition and other workshops.

The i-tri program celebrated its sixth year of training girls—some of whom had never ridden a bike before or didn't know how to swim—to complete a triathlon, a goal most would have considered impossible before joining the group. Sixty girls participated in the triathlon this year, a record number according to i-tri founder Theresa Roden. The program began in the Springs School and Montauk before expanding to the Southampton Intermediate School. It added Sag Harbor to its roster this year as well.

Goldie Sullivan, 12, of Sag Harbor was the first i-tri girl to finish, taking 15th overall in 47:36. For Roden, the order of finish for her girls is not important—it's the moments in between that matter, she said. Like watching Sarah, an i-tri girl from Sag Harbor, overcome some serious nerves and anxiety surrounding the swim and



bike portions thanks to help from Maria Chavez, an i-tri alum who volunteered as a coach for the months of training leading up to the triathlon. Chavez was by Sarah's side during the bike portion through North Haven last Wednesday. By the time Sarah crossed the finish line, the anxiety was gone.

"When she took off for the run, you could see she was having such a positive, smiling experience," Roden said. "There are so many stories like that, but that was one of my favorites."

This was the first year that the i-tri girls and many of the other triathletes competed at Long Beach. In previous years, the girls trained for the Maidstone Park Youth Triathlon.

Roden said that hosting the triathlon at Long Beach, along with co-creator Sharon McCobb, was the realization of a longtime goal.

"I had envisioned our race moving to Long Beach for years now," Roden said. "But so many people told us [the Town of Southampton] would never let us do it. But when we went in and met with [Town Supervisor Anna Throne-Holst] and the people on the Town Board, and they heard about the vision behind this event, they completely accepted us."

Roden explained that Long Beach is an ideal venue because it can accommodate the growing number of kids interested in participating in the triathlon, and because of the presence of designated bike lanes in Southampton Town.

In addition to the town, Roden said many other groups and businesses in the community have generously supported the triathlon, and the i-tri girls in particular. The Hampton Jitney donated buses that brought the girls down to Long Beach for training in the weeks leading up to the triathlon, and Units To Go, based on the North Fork, donated two large storage lockers to house the bikes that remained at Long Beach during those weeks. Roden added that five i-tri girls learned to ride bikes for the first time by participating in the program.

"We are so overwhelmingly grateful that our community supports us and values the work we're doing," Roden said. "What people see is the culmination of six months, and it's a huge accomplishment for these girls."

"Once they've done this," she continued, "they can never say again, 'I can't.' Now that they've crossed that finish line, they know there's nothing they can't do."



Goldie Sullivan



Tiffanie Wyche

## Turbo Tri Racers Brave The Rain, Raise Money for I-Tri

By **Cailin Riley** | June 23, 2015



Seventy-five competitors braved rainy conditions for the Turbo Tri in Springs on Saturday.

For many people, a triathlon is something to be seen rather than experienced. But for those who have always wondered what it would be like to attempt one, the Turbo Tri in East Hampton provides the perfect opportunity.

Seventy-five people braved soggy conditions on Saturday to compete in the third edition of the event—comprising a 300-yard bay swim, seven-mile bike, and 1.5-mile run—at Maidstone Park in Springs. The Turbo Tri is billed as a “race for everyone,” because of the short and manageable distances. Participants can compete individually or as part of a relay team.

David Horton, 46, finished first on Saturday, in 36:46.15, followed by Anthony Daunt, 24 (37:31.60); Noell Kelly, 44 (37:57.65); Elliot Bock, 29 (37:59.95); Ben Horton, 16 (38:10.81); and Kittredge Zuk, 32, the top female finisher, in 39:33.54. Complete results are at [just-in-time-racing.com](http://just-in-time-racing.com).

The Turbo Tri is a fundraiser for i-Tri, a program that fosters self-respect, empowerment, self-confidence, positive body image and healthy lifestyle choices for adolescent girls, through a curriculum of physical fitness, family outreach, nutrition classes and self-esteem workshops. This year’s Turbo Tri brought in more than \$21,000 for i-Tri, according to i-Tri founder Theresa Roden.

The Turbo Tri follows the same distances as the Hamptons Youth

Triathlon (formerly the Maidstone Park Youth Triathlon), which will take place at a new location this year, at Long Beach in Sag Harbor, on Wednesday, July 15, at 5:30 p.m. Training for and competing in the youth triathlon is one of the focuses of the i-Tri program, and each year, several girls from the program compete in the triathlon.

For more information on the Hamptons Youth Triathlon—which is open to all boys and girls age 10 to 17—and on i-Tri, visit [itri-girls.org](http://itri-girls.org).

## Inspiration Found by Racing with i-tri

By Carrie Ann Salvi | June 22, 2015

Despite the mud and puddles on the ground and the rain and chill in the air on Saturday afternoon, i-tri's sixth annual Turbo Tri fundraising triathlon at Maidstone Park in East Hampton was a well-attended success. Registration, dinner, and sponsorships brought in about \$21,000, according to Theresa Roden, the event's founder and executive director.

Seventy-five racers ranged from hardcore Ironman triathletes to a team of three "Unfit Mothers" who rode, according to Roden, to show their kids that anybody could compete. The Turbo Tri consisted of a 300-yard swim, 7-mile bike and 1.7-mile run.

David Horton, 46, of Remsenburg finished first overall in 36:46.15 and was followed by Anthony Daunton, 24, in 37:31.60 and Noell Kelly, 44, in 37:57.65. The women's winner was Kittredge Zuk, 32, with a time of 39:33.54, while Southampton's Sally Dawson, 38, finished second in 41:08.86. Third place went to Mary Lenzi, 54, with a time of 42:02.50.

The real stars of the event, however, were the i-tri girls, especially Destiny Milnes, 12, who overcame tremendous hurdles this year.

"She was bullied and used to come home crying," her mother, Kim Tibbetts, said on Tuesday. On top of that, her family has been through extreme hardship the last two years. "Everything went downhill for her," her mother said. "She had no friends, she was picked on, she had no confidence."

All of that has changed, thanks to the help of i-tri.

"She made so many friends. She feels like she can do things," her mother said. Despite obstacles that included a move to Hampton Bays, "she saw this through to the end, and put her heart and soul into it," Tibbetts added.

Destiny was cheered as she crossed the finish line on Saturday. Although i-tri's inaugural youth triathlon will take place in July, Milnes ran a modified version of the adult race because she will not attend that event. "We are all so proud of her," Tibbetts said.

I don't mind what people tell me about myself," Destiny said about what she learned during her first year in the i-tri program. "It doesn't matter what they think as long as I feel great."

Roden knows what it feels like to be an outsider. "I dreaded gym class," she said, "I was overweight." It wasn't until her her 30s that she had the motivation to start training after seeing some athletes compete on the beach on Block Island.

After crossing a finish line of her own, Roden realized how transforming the journey was. She saw how going a bit further or faster each day made her feel. "I wanted to encourage everyone," she said. Looking at her teenage daughter she thought about what a different experience she would have had if she had learned these skills at that age.



David Horton took first place at the rainy but well attended Turbo Tri Maidstone triathlon.



I-tri girl Destiny Milnes got a warm welcome at the finish line for her first race since she will be unable to attend the kids race on July 15.

Aside from the physical aspects, i-tri addresses mental issues “in a very positive way,” Roden said, adding that the program helps kids meet others who have come through hard times and realize that things can get better.

“My mom saw what she needed to change and she took action on it,” said Abby Roden, Theresa’s daughter.

“Fifty Springs School teachers are racing today. They’ve seen what a difference i-tri makes.” There have been studies on how i-tri has improved their math and science grades, she added.

“There is no definition of what an itri girl looks like,” she said. The girls range from sibling caretakers with Spanish-speaking parents “to blonde-haired blue-eyed girls who don’t think they’re pretty,” she said.

Abby also spoke about Annette MacNiven, the girls’ “fallen amazing coach” and world-class mountain-biker who died in September. MacNiven, a member of Team USA who was a part of a group that worked to add off-road biking as an Olympic sport, was remembered on Saturday for her spirit, laughter and dedication.

Abby recalled how MacNiven put in extra time to teach a struggling young girl how to ride a bike. That girl became “one of the best bikers we had,” she said, adding that she has since taken leadership roles in her class. She said the girls use MacNiven’s “inner light to help us.” Since many of the i-tri girls will learn to swim and ride a bike for the first time, the program hires certified, professional instructors in swimming, running and cycling.

The program began with eight girls at the Springs School, and currently enrolls 60 from five schools. The program is free to the students. “We are a family. You don’t have to be poor, you don’t have to be depressed, you don’t have to be heavy,” said Abby Roden, “Reach out, you can be part of it.”

Anna Rafferty, a 14-year-old from Springs, said on Saturday that she will soon compete in her third triathlon. “I was really quiet and didn’t really have any friends,” she said. “The girls in the program are like sisters. I feel confident from all of the people that support me.”

“It’s something I can always depend on. It’s a second family. They will always be there for me,” said

Kaya Mulligan 15, an i-tri alumni coach approaching tenth grade at East Hampton High School. “It has opened so many doors to my life.”

“If something is happening, you can always talk about it. You can feel secure,” said Tiffany Farez, 11. She said i-tri has empowered her and helped her not to “feel really gloomy.” She said the group meets every Thursday and every Saturday at practice. “We talk about our problems. We let it go. If you are very sad, people can comfort you,” she added.

“I used to be so negative and I used to bring myself down. Now I am positive and I like to help others,” said Pamela Ramirez, 14.

Also recognized on Saturday was the girls’ swim coach and internationally-known triathlete, Steve Tarpinian, who died in March. Kathleen King spoke the honors.

“He was my friend for 25 years,” King said. “He made me laugh and feel loved.” King said Tarpinian was humble despite his 17 Ironman competitions, which consist of a 2.4-mile swim, 112-mile bike and 26.2-mile run all in the same day. King asked for all to live as he did, “Be kind always. Do not speak negativity against yourself or others. Love freely and openly. Always drink good coffee and eat dark chocolate.”

Next up for the itri girls, in addition to meeting their fundraising goal by Tuesday, June 30, at <http://goodcircle.org/projects/i-tri/>, is

their first youth triathlon at Long Beach in Sag Harbor on July 15 at 5:30 p.m. Registration is open to all kids from 10 to 17, and volunteers are needed.

“We’ve been dreaming of this for years,” Theresa Roden said.

## *GoodCircle Promises a Win for Charities and for Businesses*

\$27,535 goal for I-Tri with Hampton Jitney help

By **Christine Sampson** | May 28, 2015

Americans donated \$335 billion to charitable causes last year, and according to GuideStar, an organization that tracks the nonprofit world, there are 1.8 million organizations in this country that rely on donations, grants, and fund-raising events for the good work they do.

In East Hampton, one company has found a way to localize those numbers. It is GoodCircle, and it was launched a little over a year ago by Fred Doss and Joan Overlock, who are friends and business associates. Its model is part “cause marketing,” a term that refers to cooperation between for-profit businesses and nonprofit organizations, and part crowdfunding, which, thanks to websites like Kickstarter.com, GoFundMe.com, and IndieGogo.com, is now a part of everyday language. Its goal is to connect businesses, nonprofit organizations, and the community at large to accomplish beneficial projects.

Most recently, GoodCircle partnered with Hampton Racquet, Smart Sports Surfacing, and the Eleanor Whitmore Early Childhood Center to raise money for a \$17,000 new sports and play area and equipment at the center. Ground was broken last week. Businesses like the Hampton Jitney and Main Beach Surf and Sport have jumped on board, pledging in-kind services or matching donations from individuals.

“What we are is a tool for businesses. We maximize businesses’ charitable donations,” Ms. Overlock said in an interview Tuesday. “We do that in a way that gives them a very tangible and measurable outcome. . . . They know how they’re affecting change.”

Ms. Overlock and Mr. Doss have dubbed their company GoodCircle because what comes in ultimately winds up going out to a nonprofit. Most campaigns have been local so far, such as one for the David E. Rogers M.D. Center at Southampton Hospital, which helps patients with H.I.V. and AIDS, and another to restore the front porch of the Sag Harbor Whaling and Historical Museum.

“The donors win,” Ms. Overlock said. “They’re demanding transparency. Their donations are going farther.”

Having met through a mutual friend in 2010, Mr. Doss and Ms. Overlock decided almost immediately that they could create something big by combining her background in advertising and marketing and his in business management and nonprofit work. They began brainstorming in the summer of 2013.

“We started here intentionally. We know the community, and . . . the East End has embraced us,” said Mr. Doss, who is also a co-founder of the local organization Paddlers for Humanity, which supports mental health services for children.

Lars Svanberg, the owner of Main Beach Surf and Sport in Wain-

scott, who is about to launch his fourth project with GoodCircle, said working with Mr. Doss and Ms. Overlock has “enabled me to do certain projects that I wanted to raise money for in a seamless way” while still devoting most of his time to business.

“I didn’t have the background in marketing and platform building that it takes to be successful in fund-raising,” he said. “We all have these different friends, and friends of friends, and GoodCircle can get the word out. It goes out like a big net, and they catch everyone who’s interested in donating to your cause. They’ve been really good to work with.”

GoodCircle’s latest effort is for I-Tri, which encourages self-esteem, proper nutrition, and leadership in preteen girls and trains them to compete in the Hamptons Youth Triathlon. It hopes to raise \$27,535 by June 8, with Paddlers for Humanity pledging up to \$7,268 as a dollar-for-dollar match of other donations and the Hampton Jitney providing the rest to support 72 sixth, seventh, and eighth-grade girls from Montauk, Springs, Sag Harbor, and Southampton in the triathlon.

Among other costs, the donations will fund professional trainers’ fees for the triathlon, which GoodCircle calls “critical to the girls’ reaching the starting line for a life-changing experience.” Prospective donors can visit [goodcircle.org/projects/i-tri](http://goodcircle.org/projects/i-tri) to learn more.

Theresa Roden, the founder and executive director of I-Tri, said, “With GoodCircle, we hope to continue and build on this in the coming years. They have been so wonderful to work with. . . . Everything that they promised they have delivered on, and we feel so fortunate.”

GoodCircle’s local work is only part of the picture. Mr. Doss and Ms. Overlock have set their sights on a national presence. They said they don’t see Kickstarter as a competitor, and believe GoodCircle is on a different level than GoFundMe, which doesn’t always benefit nonprofits. While GoodCircle builds a small fee into project goals to support its work, it does not yet have a full-time staff or an official office, although they are expected to be possible soon.

Mr. Doss said he and Ms. Overlock have found their work very satisfying. “We come back and say how did we get so lucky? We just meet incredible people on both sides of the equation. We meet phenomenal business owners and great people doing great work at the nonprofits.”



# *Registration Underway for East End Mental Health Awareness Day*

By Taylor K. Vecsey | March 25, 2015

The new South Fork Behavioral Initiative, which would provide immediate mental and behavioral health care to those in need, particularly students here, will be a focus of the upcoming 12th annual East End Mental Health Awareness Day, which is slated for April 11. While the workshops and panel discussions are free, advance registration is required.

Family members, individuals living with a mental illness, community members, and professionals have been invited to attend. The gathering, which will be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Southampton High School, is co-sponsored by the Towns of Southampton and East Hampton. Kristie Golden, the associate director of operations in neurosciences at Stony Brook Medicine, and Jeffrey Steigman, the chief administrative officer with the Family Service League, will discuss the new South Fork Behavioral Health Initiative, which is bringing additional mental health services to the East End. The Medicaid redesign will also be a topic of discussion.

A panel discussion will start off the day. There will be morning and afternoon workshops, on topics including substance abuse and mental health concerns in Suffolk County, the importance of peers in recovery, and psychopharmacology. Theresa Roden, the executive director of I-Tri, Transformation Through Triathlon, will lead one workshop on inspirational triathlon racing. Exhibitors will be available throughout the day.

Participants can register online at [southamptontownny.gov/mentalhealthday](http://southamptontownny.gov/mentalhealthday). Registration brochures are available at local libraries and East Hampton and Southampton Town Halls. To request a brochure, call 631-702-2445.

# I-Tri Expands To Pierson In Sag Harbor

It just keeps getting bigger.

By **Cailin Riley** | March 10, 2015

The I-Tri program has expanded again, this time to Pierson Middle School in the Sag Harbor School District. Created by Theresa Roden, I-Tri is a community-based intervention program that fosters self-respect, personal empowerment, and positive body image for adolescent girls by helping them learn to make healthy choices. One of the main focuses of the program is to train young girls to compete in a youth triathlon, but the program takes a multi-faceted approach to reaching that goal, and in the process, also achieves much more.

“They’re working toward the goal of competing in a youth triathlon, but we reach that goal through mind, body and spirit,” Roden said.

With the addition of a group of girls from Pierson, I-Tri now has 75 individuals enrolled in its program from Montauk, Springs and Southampton as well. Roden and other teachers and board members from I-Tri work closely with personnel at each school to select girls they believe would benefit from the program.

“Any girl can benefit from this, but because we don’t have the means to offer it to everyone, we get the input of the school as to who would benefit most,” Roden explained.

Girls in the program meet once a week at the Y in East Hampton to train for the Hamptons Youth Triathlon (formerly called the Maidstone Park Youth Triathlon), which will take place this year on Wednesday, July 15, at Long Beach in Sag Harbor at 5:30 p.m. The triathlon was moved to Long Beach from its previous home in Maidstone Park in Springs. The Turbo Tri, which followed the same course as the Maidstone Park youth event, will still be held at Maidstone Park, and is set for June 20 this year. The Turbo Tri gives adults a chance to test out the shorter triathlon distance.

While the I-Tri girls make up an increasingly larger contingent in the youth triathlon each year, the event is open to all children ages 10 to 17.

Most of the girls who participate in the I-Tri program have never attempted a triathlon or anything like it, so when they complete it, it’s a special moment for not only them but everyone involved in the program, as well as their family members. Finding the strength to do something they may have never thought was possible is a big part of what I-Tri is all about, and Roden and her cohorts are committed to doing everything possible to support the girls.

On Monday night, the first official day of the program for the Pierson contingent, the girls participated in a hands-on family nutrition session, led by registered dietitian, health teacher and organic farmer Haley London. With London’s guidance, the group discussed label reading and healthy snacking, and also made kale chips and hummus using ingredients donated by Schiavoni’s Market in Sag Harbor.

“Everything is very positive,” Roden said. “We’re not saying, you know, don’t ever have ice cream. But we tell them that you’re training for a goal, so everything you put into your body will either help you reach that goal or make it harder.

“It’s one of the most popular parts of the program,” Roden continued. “Families are able to make changes, and they even tell us they start eating meals together again. So it’s a really good thing.”



Haley London, a registered dietitian, health teacher and organic farmer, speaks to Pierson students about nutrition during the first of four Hands-On Family Nutrition sessions for the new group of I-Tri girls.

# THE EAST HAMPTON STAR

SHINES FOR ALL

## *It was Standing Room only at I-Tri's Mother-Daughter Retreat*

By Jack Graves | March 5, 2015



Kathleen King, of Tate's Bake Shop fame, told the I-Tri girls at a mother-daughter retreat Saturday that she had never been dissuaded from doing anything because she was a girl.

"All girls under 20 have to sit on the floor," Theresa Roden, I-Tri's founder, said as it became clear that, because of the large crowd Saturday, there wouldn't be enough chairs to sit on in the Eleanor Whitmore Early Childhood Center's large central room, where the empowerment program's mother-daughter retreat was to begin a new year.

Roden admittedly has a tiger by the tail. When asked during a conversation at The Star the day before what I-Tri's numbers were now — now that the Sag Harbor middle school has been added to a list that includes the Springs School, the Montauk School, and Southampton's middle school — she hesitated. "We've got the entire East End now. Certainly it's more than 50. I don't want to put a number on it yet. We'll know more when the girls come to the Y for their athletic evaluations on March 7."

As far as those evaluations went, she added, "We make it clear to them that they're not competing against each other, that they're competing against themselves. These evaluations, which include swimming four lengths of the pool, are to gauge their progress . . . we're just looking for improvement."

What about those who can't swim four lengths of the pool, she

was asked. "That's what we love — that will give them something to work on with our coaches, Amanda Foscolo, Jenna Rocker, and a new coach from Montauk, Angelika Cruz."

Our "big news," Roden continued, "is that we'll have two youth triathlons this year — the one we've always had at Maidstone Park in Springs, and a new one, at Long Beach in Sag Harbor, on July 15."

While the youth triathlon at Maidstone Park was a fund-raiser for the Y.M.C.A. East Hampton RECenter, the Turbo-Tri, for adults, also at Maidstone Park, on June 20, and the new Youth Triathlon at Long Beach are I-Tri fund-raisers, Roden said.

Sharon McCobb, who is I-Tri's athletic training director (and also president of the Old Montauk Athletic Club), said Monday that she hopes to hold the Maidstone Park youth triathlon "in the middle of August. . . We haven't settled on a date yet."

At Saturday's retreat, which included mind, body, and spirit exercises designed to boost the self-esteem of the "transformation through triathlon" group's young teens, Kathleen King, one of I-Tri's major donors, who sold her Tate's Bake Shop business not long ago for an exceedingly handsome sum, reiterated her own mother's advice, to wit, that they oughtn't doubt that they could do whatever

it was they wanted to do.

King said, in a separate conversation, that until she had met Roden “two or three years ago, I hadn’t heard of I-Tri; I didn’t have any idea of what was being accomplished here at the grassroots level.”

“It struck me,” she said, “as being very positive. After we’d talked and she’d showed me a video of the girls, I was very moved — I thought what she was doing was fantastic. I made a donation right then and there” — \$10,000, Roden was to say in her introduction of King.

Never had her mother, “a very independent, outspoken woman,” ever said she couldn’t do something because she was a girl, said King, who recently made a \$20,000 donation to I-Tri.

“I was baking and selling cookies at 11,” she said in answer to a question, “putting the money aside for school clothes, and ultimately I put myself through college [at the State University at Cobleskill] from what I made.”

“And the rest is history,” this writer said.

“Yes. We went nationwide. I sold the business in August to Riverside, a private equity company . . . I still own part of it.”

Also at the Early Childhood Center that day was the I-Tri board’s director, Lisa Valentine, a triathlete from Huntington, who had met Roden at an Around-the-Sound long-distance swim race in Bermuda a few years ago, and who, as had been the case with King, was impressed by what Roden was doing.

“She tapped me then, and I’m in my third year with the program now,” said Valentine, adding that “we’d love to keep going west, into western Suffolk and Nassau, and eventually . . . ‘franchising’ isn’t the right word . . . come up with a standardized curriculum that could be used nationwide.”

I-Tri’s success story is the subject of a study that Dr. Jen Gatz is to speak on at the American College of Sports Medicine’s annual conference in San Diego in May. Roden and McCobb will be among the attendees.

“The long and short of it is that she found I-Tri is a very good thing,” said Roden.

## I-Tri Girls Find Self Empowerment Through Triathlon

By Tessa Raebeck | January 22, 2015



Guadalupe Rojas mentally prepares for the race in i-tri.

Theresa Roden's motivation to run a triathlon came from a somewhat surprising source of inspiration: sitting on the beach. While visiting Block Island, Ms. Roden, who lives in Springs, saw a group of jubilant runners dart by, turned to her family and said, quite simply, "I'm going to do this next year."

"They all looked at me like I had 25 heads," said Ms. Roden, who not only ran, swam and biked across Block Island the following year, but also encouraged a group of some 20 East Enders to do the same. In 2010, she founded i-tri, a six-month program that uses training for a triathlon to teach local girls about health and nutrition, self-empowerment, and camaraderie.

"For me, it was the first time in my entire life that I cut myself some slack," Ms. Roden said of her training. "I changed that inner dialogue. We all have that negative self-talk that we do to ourselves and I, for the first time, discovered I didn't have to be so critical and if I was just a little kinder to myself, things were a lot easier. I just totally changed the way that I felt about myself and I talked about myself and to myself—and everything started to change."

Lamenting that she hadn't changed her self-talk 20 years earlier,

when her daughter Abby entered the sixth grade, Ms. Roden created i-tri for Abby and seven other girls in her class at Springs School. I-tri expanded to the Montauk School in 2012 and to Southampton last year, and on Monday, January 26, the Sag Harbor Board of Education will vote on whether to adopt the program at Pierson Middle School.

Offered free of charge to every participant, i-tri consists of triathlon-specific training of swimming, biking or running on Saturdays, weekly group lessons focused on self-esteem building and leadership skills, after-school fitness classes such as yoga and spinning, and hands-on nutrition classes, which families are welcome to attend.

The school district is asked to provide a space for i-tri to hold the in-school sessions and possibly the nighttime nutrition sessions, for support from relevant personnel such as guidance counselors, and possibly also for transportation to certain meetings. Training and classes start in March, culminating with the race in mid-July. While training is limited to sixth, seventh and eighth grade girls, i-tri graduates often remain involved through mentorship. The eight

girls who took part the first year are now juniors at East Hampton High School, and several of them started an i-tri-inspired empowerment club that meets periodically and invites successful, local women to come speak to students.

Although crossing the finish line is the most tangible reward, i-tri is at its core about empowering the girls in all aspects of their lives.

“It’s not all about training for the race,” said Maria Chavez, a freshman at East Hampton High School who started the program as a sixth grader in Springs and plans to race again this year, add-

ing that i-tri encouraged the girls and “made us feel confident about ourselves...and we weren’t afraid to tell each other anything; we had so much support.”

“It’s all about feeling good,” said Ms. Roden. “There’s nothing more important than that I feel good, because when I feel good I have more to give the world and when I give to the world, I get back.”



(L to R) Marissa Harry, Kaya Mulligan, Alicia Benis finish the i-tri race.