

## **JAALA VAN DONGEN**

### ***2023 MRA Masters Female Road Runner of the Year***

I'm a 43 year old wife and mom of three (18, 16, and 7) and work as an EA in an elementary school in Seine River School Division. My kids are my biggest fans and never fail to cheer me on and support me for all my training and every race. Running is my passion, the 'type 2' kind of fun I've come to love. I've met so many amazing people and had so many incredible experiences doing what I love. As an advocate for mental health, running is also my outlet, it is what helps heal my soul. In memory of my brother, Jon, who died by suicide in 2021 at age 43, I partnered with Eden Health and on September 30-October 1, crewed by my oldest kid Ash and my mom and support from my family and friends, I was able to run 76 miles in 24 hours to raise funds and awareness of suicide and mental illness. Over the last three years I have raised thousands of dollars for Eden Health that directly help their programs that support those with mental illness. I enjoy my yearly road trips with my mom (a breast cancer survivor, who was diagnosed on the first anniversary of my brother's death) to Boston and Fargo where she supported me while I ran marathons. My coach, Greg Penner (Arete Endurance) is vital to my running successes. Regardless of the crazy ideas or race plans I have, he never fails to come up with a plan to make it happen, and support me every step of the way.

#### ***2023 BEST TIMES:***

5k: 19:43

10k: 42:17

10 Mile: 1:08:37

Full Marathon: 3:15:36