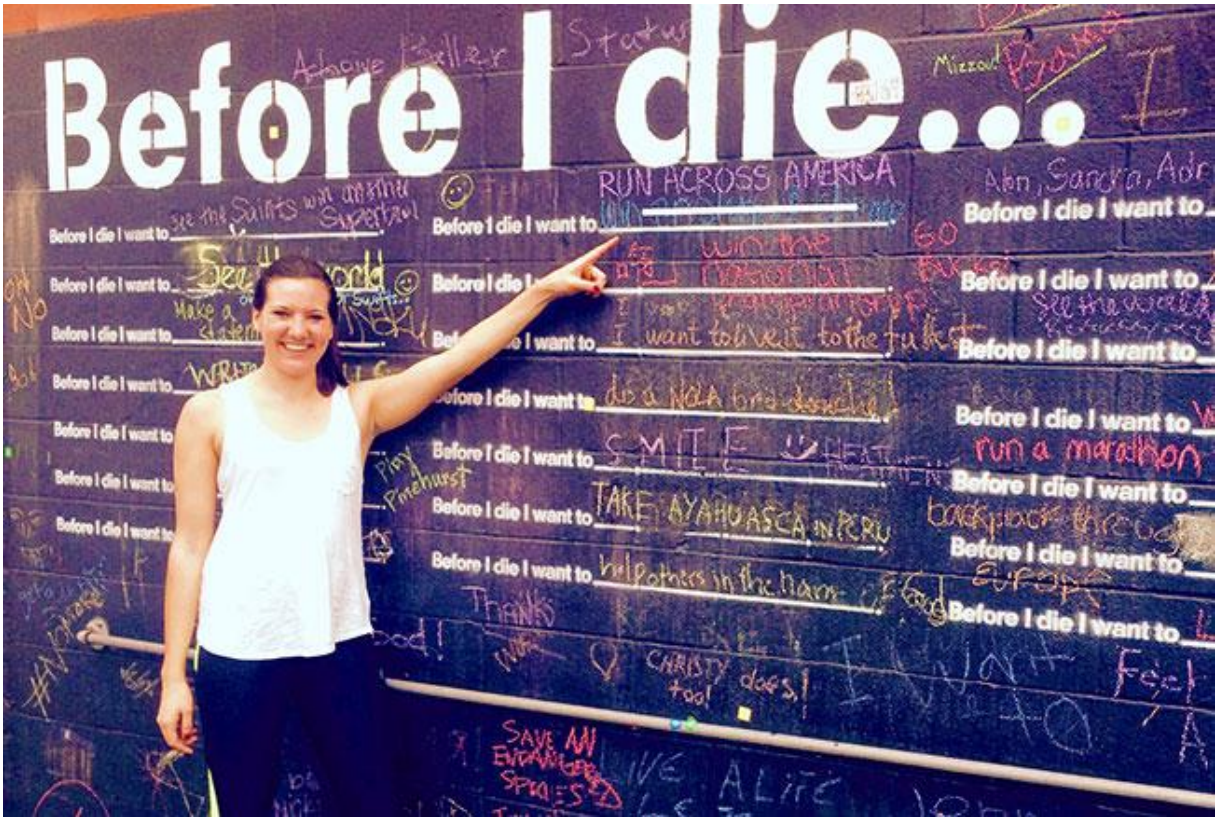
Going the distance to fight cancer

January 28, 2015

Liz Cowle grew up with cancer.

Her mother was diagnosed with breast cancer just a few weeks before Liz was born. She died a month after Liz's fourth birthday, leaving her grieving father to care for her and her two young sisters.



Liz Cowle (BSM/MACCT '15) will take part in a cross-country run this summer to promote cancer awareness.

“All the pictures that I have of my mom, she’s very withered away,” says Cowle, a fifth-year Master of Accounting student at the Freeman School. “It got to the point that she wasn’t even able to pick me up anymore. My dad had to carry her from the bed to the bathtub. She left us videos and you can see as I grew up, she gets worse.”

Losing her mother to cancer at such a young age was traumatic, but Cowle says the experience taught her to be independent, to give back when she can, and most of all to appreciate her good health and physical fitness.

This summer, she plans to do all three of those things when she embarks on a cross-country run to fight cancer. As a participant in the Ulman Cancer Fund’s 4K for Cancer, Cowle will run from San Francisco to Baltimore to raise funds and promote cancer awareness. Along the way, she’ll also visit hospitals and cancer centers to award scholarships and hand out care packages to patients undergoing chemotherapy.



Liz and her mother, Denise Cowle, who died from cancer in 1996.

“I’ve participated in 5Ks that benefit different cancer charities, but I always wanted to do something bigger,” says Cowle, who will join the New Orleans office of Deloitte & Touche in September as an auditor. “When I saw this and learned that we would actually go across the country and meet with patients, I thought it would be the best way I could spend my summer before I begin my job.”

Cowle is one of 60 runners and 100 cyclists selected to participate in the annual cross-country trek, which last year raised over $1 million to support programs for young adults affected by cancer. As a member of this year’s 4k for Cancer team, Cowle expects to run about 60 miles per week over the course of the seven-week journey. To prepare for that task, she’s been adding mileage to her daily runs in Audubon Park as well as working with a personal trainer on resistance exercise including weight lifting and suspension training. She also practices Bikram yoga

three times per week.

“I know the 4K will be emotionally and physically exhausting, but I also know the journey will be incredibly rewarding,” she says. “Cancer doesn’t stop, so why should I? People keep telling me I'm crazy for wanting to run across the country, but as Steve Jobs used to say, ‘The people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who do.’ I can't change what has happened to me and my family, but maybe I can change what happens to others.”

To learn more about 4K for Cancer or make a pledge to support Cowle’s run, visit 4kforcancer.org/profiles/liz-cowle.