

ON TRACK *with* CHRIST

by Lynn Kirk

LEAH SCHUBEL LEADS A DOUBLE LIFE.

Mornings, she dresses up and heads to her downtown Richmond office, where she guides clients in the realm of public finance. Afternoons, she dons sweats as a high school cross country coach who faithfully guides another significant group: 16 impressionable teens.

The 25-year-old Spotsylvania County native says she's had her feet in two worlds since her own teenage years. When a student at Chancellor High School, Leah's knack for math prompted her interest in a business career, but a passion for running tugged her heart, too. Not only had the high schooler won district and regional meets; she had finished in the top eight of the Big South Conference.

When a Virginia Military Institute (VMI) coach offered Leah a partial scholarship during her senior year of high school, her dream of running cross country while studying economics seemed one step closer to becoming reality.

"But with four siblings, I needed to pay my own way through college, and the VMI scholarship didn't cover everything," she recalled. "I wanted to go to school without a lot of debt, but I couldn't work extra jobs."

As a high school coach, Leah Schubel teaches life lessons while modeling a Christian lifestyle. She also regularly contributes to the VBF scholarship fund, which in years past helped keep her own mission on track.

JAY PAUL



SCHOLAR
successes

Fortunately, Leah's pastor at Chancellor Baptist Church encouraged her to apply for a Virginia Baptist Foundation (VBF) Scholarship. She was awarded tuition support that year... and the next three. In 2013, she graduated from VMI with honors, achieving a bachelor of arts in economics and business. Though juggling track and school, she ranked second among that year's economics graduates.

She also finished second on her collegiate cross country team.

Leah attributed the VBF scholarships for helping keep her life's mission on track. "It was a huge relief because they helped me stay out of debt," she shared. "And it was nice that someone else wanted to invest in my future."

Today, Leah reciprocates by investing in others. "At work, I do what I'm good at, but on the field, I do what I love: coaching." She volunteered as the local high school's cross country coach for the women's team during the 2015-2016 season. The following year, she was hired as head coach. At Bon Air Baptist, where she's a member, she sometimes coached Upward basketball for fourth- and fifth-grade girls, as well.

Through these team sports, Leah helps youth realize that every person matters, everyone has a role. She teaches teammates the importance of setting priorities; keeping commitments; showing up on time; assuming responsibility; and more. "These skills prepare them for other areas of their life," she said.

"Coaches made an impact on my life, and now I can impact these girls' lives," she added. "I want my girls to win. But most of all, I want them to learn life skills and see Christian values in me." ▼