

# Comet Alumni Spotlight

Caitlin Kowalke

St. Thomas Class of 2004



## Educational Background:

I was a proud St. Thomas Comet for 9 wonderful years (kindergarten-8th grade). I then attended Peoria Notre Dame High School from 2004-2008. Upon graduating from PND, I went on to become a student-athlete at the University of Wisconsin-Madison where I majored in Communications and competed in cross country and indoor/outdoor track and field for the badgers.

## Family:

I was fortunate to have married the love of my life, Tom Kowalke, in 2017. We welcomed our first-born, Rose in 2019 and just 15 months later, we were blessed with our second baby girl, Joanna. I also have a lovely bonus-daughter, Stella who is 16 years old! We currently live in Appleton, Wisconsin. My mom and dad, JD and Julie Comfort, still reside in Peoria and I make frequent trips back home to see them with my husband and daughters. I have three brothers, (Jim, Drake, and Dominic Comfort) who were also St. Thomas Comets.

## Recent Achievements:

I started an online run-coaching business in 2016, Fearless Feet Running LLC, which allows me to work from home so I can be present for my young daughters. I also qualified for the 2016 and 2020 Olympic Trials Marathon and am currently training to run a qualifying performance for the 2024 Olympic Trials Marathon.

**Favorite experience as a St. Thomas Comet:** I loved competing in track in the Spring and participating in cheerleading in the Winter! I also have fond memories of our awesome pep rallies.

**St. Thomas teacher who made an impact on you:** I had such positive experiences with all of my teachers at St. Thomas and I am truly grateful for everything every one of them taught me during those formative years. I really enjoyed my time with Ms. Smith (now Mrs. Martin). She made learning fun and I always looked forward to her classes!

## Piece of advice for current Comets:

Don't be afraid of failure. Some of the achievements of which I am most proud were preceded by periods of great struggle. Know that neither your successes or failures in life define you as a human being. Rather, focus on being a good person, work hard, learn from your mistakes, and surround yourself with people who make you want to be better. Lean into your Catholic values and faith!

