

Off to the Races with Tri 2 Beat MS

Kids in central Illinois will have a chance to show off their athletic prowess and raise money for multiple sclerosis research and outreach at the same time.

[Tri 2 Beat MS](#) is a triathlon created specifically for children, to foster a healthy lifestyle and sense of accomplishment. Kids don't need any previous experience to participate, and 100% of proceeds will benefit MS patients. OSF HealthCare Illinois Neurological Institute is a proud sponsor of the race, which is in its 5th year.

The triathlon is set for Saturday, June 8 at 9:00 AM at Shore Acres Park in Chillicothe, Illinois. Kids aged 6-15 will swim 25 yards in Shore Acres pool, bike 2 miles and run a half mile. The start and finish are both at the park.

Tri 2 Beat MS is the brainchild of race director Leann Stickel. Stickel was diagnosed with MS in 2009 when she was just 29 years old. She says after her diagnosis she signed up for her first triathlon, and physical activity has been a form of therapy for her, both physically and emotionally.

"I am a mom of four kids, and so it felt like a natural fit to do a race that was around kids," explained Stickel. "Fitness has played such a huge role in my coping with a chronic illness, and I feel so passionate about inspiring kids to love fitness."

In the past four years, Tri 2 Beat MS has raised more than \$50,000 for MS research and outreach. According to Stickel, the first step to understanding MS, its symptoms and its treatments is education. She hopes that as the triathlon grows, so does awareness of the disease.

"The majority of people that are diagnosed are between 20 and 40 and they're women. But a lot of us are busy, we're distracted with kids, so we dismiss symptoms that may be showing signs early, so I think that awareness is huge," she said.

Kids can sign up for Tri 2 Beat MS until Saturday, June 7. There is no race day registration. Click [here](#) to register.

For more information, you can visit tri2beatms.com, or email tri2beatms@gmail.com.