

From rock bottom, Raleigh man starts run club to face addiction

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By Jeff Hogan, WRAL anchor/reporter

Every Tuesday night Matt Elliott goes for a run.

On a recent run night, the 32-year-old Elliott puts hit Oak City Recovery Run club through the paces.

"Everybody knows the route tonight, right?" Elliott asks the group.

Then they take off, pushing through the fading daylight and the temporary pain of the run in search of the so-called runner's high — a far different high than Elliott chased not too long ago.

Elliott will toe the starting line Saturday with thousands of other runners for his second Rock 'n' Roll Half Marathon in Raleigh. But just getting there has been a struggle.

"I hit a few rock bottoms," Elliott said. " But probably waking up here. I lost everything or gave it away, as I call it now, to drinking."

"Here" is Healing Transitions, a recovery center for addicts in Raleigh. That's where Elliott said he woke up from his last binge having lost his jobs, his money, his home and his marriage.

"It was a dark place for sure, but I think it's one of those places everyone has to hit in order to be willing to ask for help," he said.

At rock bottom, far away from the start line of any race, is where Elliott found exactly what he needed: the humility found in recovery and time to think.

After a year in the center, Elliott and his friend Justin Garrity started the Oak City Recovery Run Club. Through exercise and fellowship, the group now offers support for those facing the same struggles Elliott did.

"We all come from different backgrounds — social backgrounds, economic backgrounds — but our story is all the same," Elliott said.

They relate, and they run. Their finish line is sobriety.

"To have these moments and to enjoy life again — I'm grateful, and it keeps me motivated," Elliott said.

Since starting the running club, Elliott has recovered everything in his life that he lost. Now, the group urges people in the program to exercise and sign up for races so they can see there are positive celebrations that can be done in a healthy way.

[Oak City Recovery Run Club](#)

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CREDITS

Reporter

[Jeff Hogan](#)

Web Editor

[Evan Matsumoto](#)