

Heather was born on June 25, 1976 in Corpus Christi TX and moved to Keystone Heights when she was 5 years old. After High School, she left for a brief time to obtain her bachelor's and master's degrees from FSU. She then returned to Keystone Heights to help her Mom, and while back home, she was hired to teach at Price Middle School in Interlachen. Heather has been a teacher for 17 years, 14 of which as a self-contained ESE teacher. During that time she was primarily working with Intellectually disabled students, students with Autism, and students with severe emotional disabilities. Two years ago, Heather decided to use her expertise in intervention to work with students who primarily have reading disabilities.

Heather's greatest accomplishment has been her journey to undertake and achieve extreme weight loss. In October of 2010, she became extremely ill and was on antibiotics for months, to no avail. Whatever the illness was (the doctors never did figure it out) it attacked and damaged her lungs. She woke up on Christmas day, and had to be rushed to the hospital because her oxygen level had dropped to the point that she was dying. Heather spent several weeks in the hospital, and while in there it became apparent to her that she had to start living a healthier lifestyle. Then and there, she made the decision to start eating cleanly, exercise regularly and lose weight.

When leaving the hospital, she needed oxygen therapy and was confined to her home for several more weeks. Once doctors felt her lungs were healthy enough that she was no longer in danger, she was given a portable oxygen tank, allowed to return to work, and allowed to start exercising. That was when she decided to join Genesis Fitness.

At the beginning, she had to start slowly being still on oxygen therapy. Out of embarrassment she would not bring her oxygen tank in the gym. That stubbornness, while detrimental at times, eventually worked in her favor in regards to health and fitness. At the beginning, she could only walk half a mile. Now, she runs between 6 and 6 1/2 miles a day and no longer has problems with asthma, or I rarely gets sick.

Heather's healthy eating habits and active lifestyle resulted in weight loss of over 300 pounds and she has maintained the weight loss for a little over 2 years.

Exercise and eating healthy allowed her to be able to have a child, her son David, who will be 3 years old at the end of September. Additionally, Heather was married to Jason, "her wonderful husband" she says, on January 30, 2016. When people ask her for advice on weight loss, which they often do, she shares with them what she used to teach her emotionally disturbed students: "every breath is a chance to make a better choice."

Just because one starts by making a bad decision, (this goes for anything, not just eating) doesn't mean one has to continue down that path. "It is a mantra that I live by, and something that I remind myself of everyday" she says.

Will Parramore, the Fitness Center manager, says that "Heather inspires and motivates others by the effort she puts in her training and by what she has accomplished."