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## Boston Marathon winner geared up for Shelter Island 10K

by [Julie Lane](#) | 06/20/2014 2:00 PM



*Meb Keflezighi, who won the Boston Marathon in April, will be running in the Island's 10K on Saturday. (Credit: courtesy)*

When Mary Ellen Adipietro confirmed that Meb Keflezighi would race in this Saturday's Shelter Island 10K, it was months before the Olympic medalist became the first American to win the Boston Marathon in April.

His win in Boston only added to his allure, she said. But it was his life story as one of 10 children who travelled from Eritrea, a small East African village, with their parents to

eventually settle in California and begin his pursuit of the American dream, that inspired Ms. Adipietro to invite him.

He came from a war-torn country in the Horn of Africa where he likely would have died if his parents not had the foresight to get the family out of Africa, Dr. Frank Adipietro said. “He’s going to raise a lot of spirits,” Ms. Adipietro said.

Running the Boston Marathon in 2013, when a bombing killed three people and maimed numerous others, “brought him back to his roots,” Dr. Frank said about Mr. Keflezighi. It’s why returning to Boston meant so much to him this year.

“After the bombings, I wondered what I could do,” Mr. Keflezighi said. “What can I do to change things. And I decided I would run and do my best to finish first.”

On his running bib in Boston, Mr. Keflezighi carried the names of those who had been killed in the bombing — 8-year-old Martin William Richard, 23-year-old Lingzi Lu and 29-year-old Krystal Campbell.

### **Running the show**

Coming to Shelter Island gives Mr. Keflezighi a chance to share his experiences with others, the elite athlete said.

He’ll begin Friday afternoon with Joan Benoit-Samuelson, the first woman to win an Olympic gold medal in the sport, and Dr. Adipietro on a live radio broadcast from Fiske Field on WLNG (92.1 FM) between 1 and 3 p.m.

Mr. Keflezighi and Ms. Benoit-Samuelson have become fast friends; she authored a forward to Mr. Keflezighi’s book, “Run to Overcome.” They will be sharing that friendship with listeners Friday, and talking about what marathon running has come to mean in their lives. They’ll also be encouraging others to tackle what is “such a humbling sport,” said Dr. Adipietro, a marathon runner himself. Members of the Shelter Island School’s Running Club will pose their own questions to the two elite runners on the broadcast.

Then they and other East End track team members and residents will gather between 4 and 5 p.m. Friday in the Shelter Island School auditorium for an informal discussion prior to the pre-race pasta buffet at American Legion Hall.

“To see kids running with the elite runners at the start of the race — that’s about as exciting as it gets,” Dr. Adipietro said.

### **What to see, what to hear**

Dr. Adipietro is not only the voice of the pre-race activities on Friday, but it will be his voice again on WLNG as he hosts a pre-race show Saturday from the school lawn, both sharing basic

information about the upcoming race, snagging interviews with elites and helping to put a local stamp on the event. He's also the voice calling race results as runners cross the finish line.

Talking about special memories he has gathered through the years, Dr. Adipietro remembered the race two years ago when Chrystyna Kestler took to the stage for the dedication of the final mile of the race to her son, Lt. Joseph Theinert, who was killed in Afghanistan on June 4, 2010.

It was Ms. Adipietro's idea to line that mile with American flags. Many runners have commented about the inspiration they have gained from the sight of those flags, Dr. Adipietro said. Those who had run races elsewhere had never seen anything like that. It's just one of many aspects that makes the Shelter Island race so special, he added.  
crowded field

If early numbers are correct, look for one of the largest fields of runners Saturday. The week before the gun goes off, there were already many more racers registered than at the same time in any of the previous 34 years. And typically, many racers don't sign up until late in the week of the race, even coming in on the day of the race.

Looking ahead, Dr. Adipietro is hoping Saturday will bring clear, but not hot weather, recalling previous years when the staff in the medical tent was kept busy treating runners suffering from heat exhaustion.

So far, the running gods seem to be smiling on Shelter Island, with a forecast of a beautiful day.