



# Retail Business Services

## Associate With Big Heart Competes in Global Competition

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Caring for others is at the heart of being a superhero – and it's a value embodied by Caroline Chamoun,



Process Excellence and Analytics Manager for Retail Business Services, the services company of Ahold Delhaize USA. On Sept. 18, Caroline will compete in the World Championships for the 70.3 Ironman triathlon. During this intense race, Caroline will join other athletes from around the world to complete a 1.2-mile swim, a 56-mile bike ride and 13.1-mile run—a whopping 70.3 miles, total. An avid athlete, Caroline says she never dreamed of competing in a triathlon until she stepped up to comfort a grieving friend.

"Honestly, I never thought I'd get into triathlons, because road cycling terrified me," she said. "But in 2016, a dear friend of mine was diagnosed with terminal brain cancer. He and his wife, Marguerite, were planning to do the triathlon that year – it had been a longtime goal of hers to compete in one. But after the diagnosis, he wasn't going to be able to participate. But as an elite athlete and Ironman himself, he told her, 'Please keep training. Do it, no matter whether I can be there – follow through on your wish, keep training and accomplish your dream.' So, when I heard that, I volunteered to train with her and be her partner."

At that point, Caroline had run in numerous marathons, but she wasn't expecting all that a 70.3 Ironman or full Ironman – a 140.6 -mile event – entailed.

"When I said I'd train with Marguerite, my brother immediately asked, 'Do you have any idea what you've gotten yourself into?'" she recalled with a laugh.

But Caroline isn't one to back down from a challenge, and she began training in earnest. It so happens, her brother, Jean-Pierre, joined in the challenge as well. She, Jean-Pierre and Marguerite completed the 70.3 triathlon that year and, following the passing of Marguerite's husband, competed in a full Ironman the following year, carrying some of his ashes throughout the course and later letting them go in the river where the swim took place.

"After that, we agreed we'd continue doing the 70.3 triathlon every year, in June, in his memory. It just so happened that this year that race qualified me for the World Championship," she said.

The event Caroline and Marguerite compete in is known as the Eagleman 70.3 Ironman, and is held each year in Cambridge, Md. The race is hosted by the Ironman organization, which is the official host of many competitions and organizes the 70.3 Ironman World Championship every year. Participants who perform in the top of their category at one of several different 70.3 Ironman and Ironman races are automatically eligible to compete in the championship.

"I'd participated in the Eagleman 70.3 race four times without ever qualifying before, or even thinking that was a possibility," Caroline said. "So when I got the communication telling me I'd qualified for the championship, I had to read through it several times for it to sink in. I was very excited, and it's really a bigger deal than I like to admit. I'm a little nervous – but in a good way."

The race, which will take place on Sept. 18, is held in St. George, Utah – one of Ironman's most challenging triathlon courses. Caroline will compete in the women's 70.3 race against others in her age group.

"Clearly, there's going to be more competition there," she said. "But my mentality is, it's my first 70.3 World Championship, and there's no guarantee I'll qualify in the future – so I am going to go in well-prepared, and my goal is to enjoy the experience and stay safe."

Staying safe is especially important in the era of COVID-19. But with the event being outdoors and Ironman taking precautions to prevent illness, Caroline says she can lay some of that anxiety to rest.

And, no matter how she places on a world stage, she still plans to compete annually in the Eagleman 70.3 triathlon.

"Anything is possible. Anything you put your mind to requires some training," she said. "It really boils down to having the discipline and the self-motivation to get it done right. And I'm blessed to say that when I commit to something, I commit to it."