BEFORE & AFTER

"Suddenly, I thought, 'If I can walk, let's see if I can run.'"

– TARA MARTIN

O n Tara Martin's 40th birthday, she looked in the mirror and knew she had to save her life. It was December 8, 2009. At five-foot-eight, Martin weighed 263 pounds. "I had just turned 40 and I thought, 'If I don't do something now, I'm going to wake up at 50, 60, then 70 years old, thinking my life had amounted to nothing," she says.

Opposite ❯❯ Tara Martin after her weight loss in 2011

Above left ❯❯ Martin before her weight loss in 2009

Above right ❯❯ Martin racing the 2012 Scotiabank Blue Nose Marathon in Halifax

The Halifax resident and sign language interpreter had been overweight since she can remember. "My mom spent much more time on a bar stool than coming home and cooking food. So, I was left to my own devices. At the age of five or six, you'd rather open up cherry pie filling than eat something healthy," says Martin, who grew up in Seattle, as a completely inactive child.

As the weight came on, so did depression. It wasn't long before entire days were comprised of video games and junk food – Martin often drank six to eight cans of Coke a day. "I went from 200 pounds to 270 pounds. I literally grew into the chair I was playing in," she says. Martin's addiction to video games stemmed from the chance to live through the characters she played. "I could actually be that strong person, I could conquer my own life," she says.

And so, on Martin's 40th birthday, that's what she decided to do.