

# Katie's Story

*"My name is Katie Christ, I'm 29-years-old, and I am a kayaker."*



**Name:** Katie Christ

## Occupations

Kayaker, Bartender, Jazz Singer,  
World Traveler, Writer,  
Horticulturalist, Role Model,  
& All-Around Outdoor Enthusiast

## Age

29

## Hometown

Edinboro, PA

## Education

Graduate of Susquehanna  
University in Selinsgrove, PA

## Prized Possession

"Big Al", a 17.5 ft. Wilderness  
Systems Sea Kayak Epic

## Fun Fact

Katie has traveled to all 50 states!

## Future Plans

Kayak across the Bering Strait

## Words to Live By

"When I see a distance, I just want to cross it, or climb it, or drive it. I just *have* to know what's on the other side."

"Kayaking is a naked sport. All you need is a body and a boat!"

During your first moments of conversation with Katie, you immediately find yourself smiling - her passion for life becomes contagious. This charismatic and intelligent young woman's love for kayaking stirs something within you. She tells of how kayaking was "the first thing I ever did that was nobody's idea but my own" and how, ultimately, it made her into the complete person she always strived to be.

From the afternoon in 2002 that Katie first placed her kayak into the water, she began to ignore feelings of fear and self-doubt and embraced the opportunity to try something that was totally new and different. "I really listened to my own intuition for the first time," she has said, "and I started trusting in myself and in my abilities."

Growing up, Katie struggled with body image and self-esteem issues. Like many adolescents, she felt intense pressure to live up to an unrealistic physical ideal. "I wanted to be the best, the prettiest, the thinnest. A lot of the time I felt inferior and constantly compared myself to others." Kayaking served as the vehicle for Katie's physical and cerebral metamorphosis. "My way of thinking about things completely changed. I started loving the feeling of physical power that was coming from within my body. You can no longer hate something that's giving you that much joy."

Katie's newly discovered self-confidence propelled her into traveling to indulge her desire for sport, and led her to adopt the Saguaro Cactus as her own personal symbol. "I saw this cactus in southern Arizona and I love it because it's strong and quiet, but it's always growing. Maybe not detectably, but growing nonetheless. It has a really deep root system, so a lot of its strength can't even be seen. I believe that the same applies to life. True strength comes from what you can't see."

While Katie is human and occasionally hears those voices of uncertainty, she has learned to quiet them through the solitude of kayaking. "I have something I call the SPIN cycle, which stands for Solitude, Power, Inertia, and Nature. When I'm out on the water I feel all of those things. When I am kayaking, I am home. It sustains me."

The hours Katie spends in her kayak, affectionately nicknamed Big Al, have also inspired her to write profusely. As a volunteer for The Ophelia Project's "Girls Write In The Neighborhood" mentoring program, she was inspired to do something to give back to this community organization. "I wish that there had been something like The Ophelia Project when I was growing up. I felt like it was just me, alone, dealing with what I did."

As Katie prepares to be the **first** person to ever cross Lake Erie in a kayak, she shares her hopes for what her endeavor will mean to young people everywhere: "Listen to yourself. Quiet all the other voices. Find whatever it is that you can't part with and do whatever you have to do to stay with it. The most important thing you'll ever do is find what you need. Everything else will fall into place."

