



# THE ACHILLES HEEL

Winter 2009

## NEW YORK CITY CHAPTER

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Teammates **Tammy Duckworth** and **Melynda Baker** at Chicago Marathon (photo courtesy of Lee Harrison)

## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

### Going Faster In 2010

As runners, we are always thinking about going faster and doing better. Let me describe several "lessons learned" through anecdotes.

First, be a team member. Many, many years ago, a relatively elite high school freshman relay team I was part of needed to break one minute and forty seconds for the half-mile to have a chance at scoring in an important tournament. My job was to break 25.5 seconds, which would be my best 220 ever. I accomplished it. Upon reflection, we succeeded because we were part of a team and could not let the others down.

Second, help others. **George Hirsch**, former publisher of Runner's World, was preparing to complete a two-mile race in Central Park in just over twelve minutes, a remarkable pace for someone in his sixties. I begged him to forget the race and accompany a blind runner by the name of **Cyril Charles**. Cyril was fast and they finished in 11 minutes and 53 seconds. This was much faster than George would have done by himself. He accomplished it, in part, George explained, because he was helping someone else.

Goals and competition encourage speed. My goal for a recent Boston Marathon was to break 2:30 and qualify for the following year. It was a horrible day, and going a little faster hurt. During the last miles, there was another wheelchair athlete several yards ahead. Quietly, and with extra effort, I got closer and avoided being noticed. With yards to go and all the power that could be mustered, I passed the wheelchair athlete and finished ahead. It didn't mean a whole heck of a lot in terms of the place or prize money, but it did give me an opportunity to beat someone in competition. In addition, I qualified by 4 minutes. It was a rush.

Let's call the fourth "going for the gold." **Nina Kusick** was on her way to winning the first Boston Marathon with a Women's Division. Unfortunately, at the twenty-mile mark she needed to relieve herself. If she stopped, she would not win. Nina could not hold it back and did what one would expect of a great athlete. As she completed the last miles of Boston, spectators, seeing her from the front, shouted and applauded with glee. As she passed, for six long miles, Nina heard the gasps of horror

(cont'd on page 3)

# DINNERS & AWARDS

## Pre Marathon Athletes' Dinner

On the Friday before the NYC Marathon, Achilles athletes, guides, and guaranteed entrants joined together for a festive dinner. Spirits were high as international and national athletes mingled and everyone looked ahead to Sunday's race. Awards were distributed to mark the outstanding accomplishments of the past year. This year, many of the awards honored Achilles members who passed away following the 2008 ING NYC Marathon. The family of **Joe Marotta** was on hand to present the **Joe Marotta Award for Outstanding Guide** to **Kim Daly**. Joe passed away following the 2009 ING NYC Marathon and a team of his family and friends walked the 2009 marathon in his honor.

The **James Rooney Award for Outstanding Athlete** was presented by Jim's wife and daughter to **Paulo de Almeida**, who hails from Achilles' Brazil chapter. The **John McAlinden Award for First Time Marathoner** went to **Allan Tyson**. **Julian Kane** received the **Steven R. Fastenberg Award for Outstanding Achilles Kid**. Japan won The **Avis Outstanding Chapter Award**. Two deserving soldiers, **Kent Solheim** and **John Walding**, shared the **Bank of America Award for Outstanding Achilles Freedom Team Member**, presented by Bank of America rep **Charlee Ratliff**. The evening's final award was presented to the Achilles Triathlon team, accepted on the team's behalf by triathlete **Lamar Brown**.

## Achilles Gala

Achilles held its 19th Annual Tribute Dinner on October 29. The event honored Tammy Duckworth, Assistant Secretary for Public and Intergovernmental Affairs in the Department of Veterans Affairs, and **Ira Millstein**, partner at Weil, Gotshal & Manges. A Major in the Illinois Army National Guard, Duckworth served in Iraq as an Assistant Operations Officer and also flew combat missions as a



Black Hawk helicopter pilot. During a mission north of Baghdad in 2004, her aircraft was ambushed and a rocket-propelled grenade struck the helicopter she was co-piloting. As a result of the attack, Duckworth lost both of her legs and partial use of one arm. She is an accomplished Achilles athlete, having completed the Bank of America Chicago Marathon twice. Tammy's powerful and eloquent remarks as she accepted the award for Achilles Athlete of the Year mesmerized the crowd and moved many to tears.

Ira Millstein played an integral role in making Central Park safe and accessible following the attack on Trisha Meili in 1989. He served as chairman of the Citizens Task Force on the Use and Security of Central Park, which was particularly effective in cleaning up the Northern End of the Park, where the attack took place and where Achilles athletes continue to meet twice a week for workouts. Achilles was proud to recognize Ira for his enormous contributions to New York City civic life with the **Albert H. Gordon Award**. The award was presented to Ira by **John Gordon**, AI's son, and Trisha Meili.

The event was emceed by Achilles board member **Kirstin Cole** and featured a performance by renowned singer (and generous Freedom Team supporter) **Michael Amante**. All funds raised will help to underwrite Achilles' work throughout the year and we are deeply grateful to all who donated.

## Dick Honored

On November 30, Achilles Founder and President Dick Traum was honored by FedCap for his pioneering work providing mainstream athletic opportunities for people with disabilities. **Matthew Sapolin**, Executive Director of the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, presented Dick with the award. FedCap helps people with all types of disabilities and barriers to employment join the workforce and we hope to collaborate with them to jointly optimize opportunities.

Top to bottom: **Dick Traum** and honoree **Tammy Duckworth**; **John Gordon**; **Trisha Meili** and **Ira Millstein**.  
(photos courtesy of Larry Sillen)

# ACHILLES INTERNATIONAL NEWS

## Brazil

The always-active Achilles Brazil chapter participated in the Berlin Marathon on September 20. Chapter head **Mario Mello** also had a large information booth at the Running Show Expo in Sao Paulo. He used the opportunity to showcase adaptive equipment, distribute information about Achilles, answer questions, and promote his athletes. Mario continues to be the standard bearer for an international chapter head and his Brazilian chapter participates in events nearly every week.

Also this fall, **Mariusz Golabek** from Achilles Poland participated in the SuperMarathon in Budapest. He carried a sign pre-race wishing his fellow Achilles athletes luck in New York.

## 360,000 Air Miles Are Needed for Afghanistan Program!

Achilles is beginning a chapter in Kabul, Afghanistan. The primary focus is on females who were blinded by the Taliban while on their way to school. The goal is to bring them to New York to participate in the Hope and Possibility Five-Miler in June. In addition, we have a wonderful doctor, **Dr. Richard Koplín**, (yes, I am biased. This fantastic ophthalmologist is my father!), who has worked with Achilles for over twenty years and will donate his services in an effort to provide these members with corneal transplants.

The program has many inherent challenges, the largest of which is bringing these athletes to New York. If you or someone you know can contribute miles, this would be of tremendous help. Your contribution, like clothing, is tax-deductible. If you would like to help with this program in any way please contact me, **Russell Koplín**, at [Rkoplín@achillesinternational.org](mailto:Rkoplín@achillesinternational.org).



Above: Brazil team member showing he has the right stuff at the Berlin Marathon.



Above: Achilles Colombian member makes it look easy, cruising past the ING NYC Marathon finish line. (Photo courtesy of Lee Harrison)

## President's Message (cont'd from page 1)

from the crowd as they noticed her plight. She shut out their reactions and won the race.

Finally, coaching helps. **Tanya Kutnetsova**, a Russian above-the-knee amputee, was running her first marathon. By finishing, she would become the first female above-the-knee amputee to accomplish such a feat. At the Queens entrance to the Fifty-Ninth Street Bridge, near Mile 15 of the New York City Marathon, Tanya sat down on the sidewalk, removed her artificial leg and exclaimed she could go no farther. I told Tanya she needed to get her baggage, which was across the bridge. Two miles later, on First Avenue, the crowds were roaring, and the buzz helped her run to Mile 19. At this point, she complained again, and I explained that there was a medical facility a mile up the road. We reached the Bronx. She said she could go no more. Her baggage, I explained, was in Manhattan. Tanya completed the 26.2 miles, and her life back in Russia changed dramatically. She became a star and grew in stature. As her coach, I stretched the truth a bit.

Hope these anecdotes provide some ideas and smiles. Wishing you a great New Year.

*Dick*

# THE 2009 ING NEW YORK

Achilles had 200 athletes in the 2009 ING NYC Marathon on November 1. Achilles athletes from the NYC Chapter welcomed their counterparts from states including California, Colorado, and Wisconsin. Internationally, Achilles athletes hailed from 21 countries: Australia, Belarus, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, England, France, Germany, Japan, Lebanon, Myanmar, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Poland, Puerto Rico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, and Trinidad. It was truly a terrific and memorable day for all athletes whether running, walking, handcranking, or crutching. We could not have



Above: **Ricardo Corral** and **Aquilo Calderon** exuberantly crossing the finish line. (Photo courtesy of Lee Harrison)

done it without the support of the volunteers and guides who help us staff the expo and provide valuable race day logistical assistance. Our volunteers do everything from hand out t-shirts, reunite exhausted racers with their bags, drive athletes (and their handcranks, guide dogs, and day chairs!) to their hotels, translate the plethora of languages spoken and hand out post-race drinks and snacks. Special Thank Yous go to the marathon guides; your dedication over 26.2 miles help make our athletes' marathon dreams come true. We also extend our most heartfelt gratitude to: **Stan Zucker** and **Crista Earl**, **Chris Nihill** for staying at the finish line long into the night, and most of all to **Andrew Greico** and his colleagues at NYRR's whose patience and enthusiasm made the day such a special one for all Achilles members.

The marathon is full of stories of courage and grace. Among the moving moments of the day were **Ricardo Corral** and **Aquilo Calderon** taking time from their race to help fellow Achilles athlete **Graciela Ramirez** to deal with a flat tire. Their assistance cost them valuable minutes but enabled Graciela to cross the finish line.

Among the Achilles athletes participating were two teams from NYU. **Allan Tyson**, **Yuki Goto** and **Sam Brandenburg**, all participants in the TBI program at the Rusk Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine, competed. It was the first marathon for Allan and Sam and the third for Yuki. All crossed the finish line and were amazed as they looked back at how far they have come on their long journeys of recovery. Team Rusk was sponsored, encouraged, and organized by Achilles board member **Bonnie Marks**.

Six people from the Achilles chapter at NYU Langone Medical Center completed the marathon: **Adhiambo Mitchell**, **Joe Forrester**, **Eduardo Hernandez**, **Clara Bailon**, **Iris Jiminez** and **Derek Srisanard**. The volunteers who assisted in the weeks leading up to the event, on race day, and during the race were **Katie Gatta**, **Angela Stolfi**, **Julia Vila**, **Kevin McCormick**, **Sarah Werther**, **Tricia Laverty**, **Juli Deng**, **Jenni Eftychiou**, **Kellie Morey**, **Jamie Cepeda**, and **Allison Cashen**.

All the athletes stood out but **Derek Srisanard** particularly impressed **Angela Stolfi**, Supervisor of Acute Care Physical

Therapy at Langone. In the weeks leading up to the event, Derek expressed concerns about going the full distance, fearing that he would be too tired to finish. Staff and volunteers were so busy attending to equipment and other needs that they just encouraged him to wear the appropriate clothing, get enough rest, and be confident. They were proud of him just for starting the race, feeling that whatever distance he did would be wonderful. Angela got tears in her eyes when she saw Derek approaching the finish line over 8 hours after the start of the race...what a finish! His elated expression made everyone's day.

Achilles athletes came in first among male and female handcrankers. **Dane Pilon** (1:19:48) and **Helene Hines** (1:53) finished in champion form. Holding the finish line tape were **Jack and Anne McAlinden**, whose son **John** was an Achilles athlete who passed away before having the opportunity to compete in the marathon. Anne and Jack honored John's memory by encouraging his fellow athletes and by raising funds to purchase a handcrank wheelchair. In addition John's cousin **Sarah Crum** ran the marathon and raised funds for Achilles. Sarah, a mother of three, calculated her marathon experience this way:

1 life that inspired many to do things they felt were not possible  
 4 months of training  
 5 runs after everyone was asleep  
 6 missed dinners with my family  
 7 days of leaving work early (shhh. . .)  
 17 weeks of training  
 19 runs before everyone woke up  
 43 donations (thank you notes in snail mail!)  
 72 days of training runs  
 400 miles of training runs  
 3800 dollars in support  
 26.2 miles completed  
 4 hours 43 minutes to do it  
 1 hand crank wheel chair bought with the donations  
 THE most incredible athletic experience of my life!

A note of gratitude to the 2009 participants in our ING New York City Marathon Guaranteed Entry Charity Program: Thank you so very much for your support over the past six months. We understand that this is a difficult time to ask people for money and to donate out of your own pockets. That said, your fundraising efforts and generosity mean that much more to us and the athletes we serve this year. We hope that your marathon experience was all that you hoped it would be and that you consider participating in the 2010 ING New York City Marathon with Achilles in some capacity. Please email **Janet Patton** with any questions, concerns and updates as the New Year progresses: [jpatton@achillesinternational.org](mailto:jpatton@achillesinternational.org).

# YORK CITY MARATHON



Top-Bottom, L-R; First Row: Jordanian athlete **Abeer Al-Sharif**; Achilles' own **Hakan Durantas**; Second Row: **Bill Reilly** pushing his way to a major personal best; the family of **Team Mr. Joe**; Achilles guide **Cesar Jesena** running in style; Third Row: Achilles athletes **Rosalie Ames** wheels, **Bret Jackelow** crutches, and **Allan Tyson** runs to the finish line of the ING NYC Marathon.  
(photos courtesy of Larry Sillen & Lee Harrison)

# THE ACHILLES FREEDOM TEAM OF WOUNDED VETERANS

## Chicago Marathon

October is MARATHON MADNESS MONTH! First stop: Chicago. With the continuous support of **Bank of America**, we were able to sponsor seventeen Achilles athletes to participate in the Bank of America Chicago Marathon on October 11. The marathon even holds a special handcycle division reserved for the Achilles Freedom Team of Wounded Veterans. When the Chicago community heard we were coming into town for the weekend, everyone really chipped in to ensure we had a memorable time. **Jack** and **Marge Kielczynski** and the **FBI** assisted with airport pickups and drop-offs. **PACE** and **Helping Hands** provided complimentary bus transportation to the team throughout the weekend. The **WILLIS Tower** (formerly known as the **Sears Tower**) let the team bypass the long lines to experience the **NEW Skydeck Ledge** and took complimentary photos of team once we got to the top. **Shoreline Sightseeing** provided a complimentary **Architecture boat tour** for the team. Thank you **Keri Schindler** for organizing that trip and also providing additional handcycles courtesy of **GLASA**. Then there was race day support. We had the **Bank Of America Military Support Affinity Group** representatives **Charlee Ratliff** and **Tim O'Connor**, **Stuart Cohen** of **Invacare**, **Steve Growbowski** of the **Chicago Fire Department**, who assisted with finish line ops. The many exciting finish line moments included **Chris Ayres** coming in first place for the Handcycle division. Also on the team for a repeat performance was Chicago native **Major Tammy Duckworth**, now in **DC** serving as the **Assistant Secretary of the VA**, who crossed the finish line with her racing buddy **Melynda Baker**. Hometown hero **Jack Schumacher** impressed in his first marathon. Our own **Richard Whitehead** of **Great Britain** broke his own world record with a **2:50** making him the fastest leg amputee marathon runner in the world. Folks, it is just a task to find guides for him. **Eddie Montanez**, guided by **Robin Harding**, **Chris Barsky** & **Jorge Sarmiento** ran his usual speedy time and **Nooria Nodrat** persevered to cross the finish line. We also had three charity runners **Charles Davidson**, **Patrick Flynn**, and **Susie Donahue**. The team celebrated with a post race **Pizza Party** hosted by the **Courtyard Marriott**. Chicago Pizza was provided by **Pizza 4 Patriots**. What a weekend! Thank you **CHICAGO** for all your support!

## Marine Corps Marathon

The next stop on the marathon circuit: **Marine Corp Marathon** on October 25. We had twenty eight Achilles members join us for this race, twenty one of whom were part of the Freedom Team. The **Holiday Inn Rosslyn** became Achilles' headquarters for a couple of days, starting off the weekend with a pizza party. Saturday's tune up was held in the parking garage as it was a rainy fall day. Lunch was sponsored by **U-HAUL**, which continues to do everything possible to support Achilles! Then it was off to the annual pasta party hosted by the **Arlington Fire Dept at Fire Station Five**. Sunday was perfect weather for racing. The team was able to handcycle or walk to the start to find that there were almost 60 handcyclists competing! Achilles Poland member **Mariusz Gryglas** was the first to finish from Achilles in the handcycle division with a time of **1:38**. It was especially meaningful for Achilles Kids graduate **Scott Gellerstein** to complete his first **MCM** in the handcycle division as he always wanted to serve as a Marine! Achilles Freedom Team member **Jonathan Copsy** had a remarkable time of **3:20** in the ambulatory running division. A post race celebration was held at **Tom and Carol Barbieri's** house. They hosted a wonderful **BBQ** for the Achilles Team and **Team TJ**, a running team that was set up in memory of their son, who lost his life while serving in **Iraq**. It was an inspirational weekend indeed.

## ING NYC Marathon Freedom Team

Twenty five Freedom Team members completed the 26.2 miles in handcranks. The weekend was a success because of the assistance and enthusiasm of multiple groups who stepped up to assist us throughout the weekend. The **Union League Club** provided the hotel rooms and meals for the entire weekend. Each room was stocked with **Halloween costumes**, pumpkins to be used for a carving contest, and a goody bag with all sorts of treats. We had **FDNY's Buddy** and **Dan** assist with airport pickups and drop-offs. **Roy Griffith** did his usual stellar job as the handcycle **U-HAUL** truck captain, and **Gene** was the all around go-to guy. The team took over **36th street** for a massive handcycle tune up and then it prepared for the **Halloween Bash** hosted by the **Union League Club**. The Freedom Team showed up in rare form: we had cross dressers (Roy... cough cough.... Roy), 60's psychedelic couples, devils, witches, cowboys and one scary Scotsman. There was a costume parade for the adorable children of our Freedom Team members and a pumpkin carving contest for kids and adults, an amazing buffet, and dancing throughout the night. Luckily the party didn't last too late as Sunday began with a 4:30 am wake-up call.



Top to bottom: **Greg Blackburn** takes a tune-up; **Lee Harrison** gets the best view from the top of the **Empire State Building**; Chicago Marathon. **Greg, Mary & Roy** all girly giggling. (photos courtesy of Lee Harrison)

# WOUNDED VETERANS AND MARATHON TOUR



Among the gutsy performances was the effort put forth by **Sgt Jamal Daniels**. It was his first marathon with the Freedom Team, having joined us for Hope & Possibility in 2004. Sgt Daniels' brakes gave out at Mile 14 and we weren't sure if he could finish. He dug deep and for the rest of the 12.2 miles he used his back shoulders as brakes for his handcycle. He crossed the finish line with a smile but his Freedom Team jersey was practically in shreds from the friction of his wheels. His back and shoulders were marked with deep and painful-looking cuts. Another story of true dedication!

Members of the Freedom Team helped prepare for daylight savings time by "turning back the clock" at an event held annually at Tounreau's flagship store. The legendary watchmaker showed its support for the Freedom Team at the event, arranged in conjunction with the New York City Sports Commission, led by Achilles board member **Ken Podziba**.

## San Antonio Marathon

The Achilles Freedom Team of Wounded Veterans had a small but competitive and strong team of five at the 2009 San Antonio Rock 'n' Roll Marathon on November 15th. Finishing first on the team was Freedom Team rookie, **James Oppelt**. All five of the Freedom Team competitors: **Alex Leonard, CJ Larkin, Rico Roman, James Oppelt**, and **Kody Wilson** -- were recently wounded in Iraq. All finished under two and a half hours and made us very proud!

## Palm Beach

In Palm Beach our most popular event of the year held up to its hype. The team was headquartered at the newly renovated **Double Tree Palm Beach Gardens** where we received incredible hospitality throughout the weekend. The team enjoyed relaxing at the pool or playing Wii in the lobby during their downtime. Roy and the wonderful team at Palm Beach County Fire & Rescue assisted throughout the weekend with airport pickups and invaluable logistical support. Thursday night a fundraising party was held at the home of **Fred McCarthy**; many Freedom Team members got dressed up in their uniforms and displayed their medals. Among notable attendees at the reception were Opera Singer **James Valenti, George & Tiffany Cloutier**, the inaugural hosts of the PB reception, Suffolk Construction's CFO **Charles Bendgen** and his wife **Mary**.

The next day Roy and the firefighters hosted an excursion on Lake Okeechobee riding HUGE air boats and going for helicopter rides. Then Hooters hosted a fun dinner for the team. We even joked that it was **Dan O's** birthday so he would get extra attention. Hahaha. Saturday morning it was off to the Kids races where Achilles members lead the way for our marathoners in training. Then it was off to Resort McCourt for burgers on the grill for lunch! Dinner was hosted by Roy and the **Palm Beach Fire & Rescue**.

The race was great! Over fifty Achilles members participated in the handcycle division. It was especially exciting as many were first time marathoners. Athletes in the marathon include **Dick Traum**, who surprised himself with a 2:07 marathon, members of the Achilles Freedom Team of Wounded Veterans, and **Dodi Blumstein**, a member of the Rusk Institute chapter in NYC, who completed her first marathon in a handcycle. The incredible weekend ended with a Pizza Party at the Doubletree!

Special thanks to those who donated wheelchairs for this year's event: **Fred McCarthy, George & Tiffany Cloutier, Michele & Howard Kessler, Jana & John Scarpa, Maryellen & Chris Mosca, Eileen & Buzz Abramson, George Albrecht & Helena Austin, Dick McCready, Tom Quick, JC & Marty Meyers** and **Michael Dixon**. Special thanks go to **Suffolk Construction, AVIS, Stewart Rahr** of **KINRAY** and **Bob Garvy** of **INTECH** -- our major corporate sponsors for Achilles International South Florida.

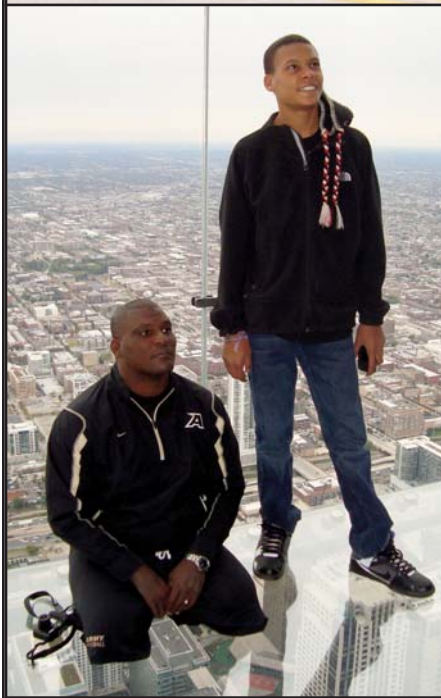
## Vegas Marathon

Freedom Team members **Ricardo Renteria, Blake McMinn, Joe Perez**, and **Mike Procia** competed in the Rock 'n' Roll Las Vegas Marathon on December 6. This was the first time Achilles had a presence in this race and we look forward to expanding our participation in the future. Thank you to **Evan Griffith** (Genna's brother!) and **Corinne Salchunas** for assisting the team throughout the weekend!



...his son **Gage** for a spin during the  
...st angle of the team in front of the  
...arathon Team at the Willis Tower;  
...les at the ULC Halloween Party.  
...Harrison and Larry Sillen)

# 2009 MARATHON



Clockwise from top left: World record holder **Richard Whitehead** and guide; first time marathoner **Dodi Blumstein** in PB; FT at Vegas Marathon with their medals; **Dick Traum** awarded first place at PB marathon; FT member **Ray Hennigar** getting tuned up for Marine corp; **Joe Traum** at NYC Marathon tune up; **Dick Traum** at the start of the Vegas Marathon; **Ken Podziba** at the start of the Vegas Marathon; **Greg Gadson** and Son atop the Willis Tower Skydeck; **Roy Griffith** tuning a bike; at the start of the Vegas Marathon; **Mary Bryant** with Mayor **Lois Frankl** in Palm Beach; **Dane Pilon** crosses Palm Beach

# ATHON EVENTS



...als; New Member **Lydia Rock** in Palm Beach; Ronald McDonald cheering on the Kids in Palm Beach; **Robin Harding** and **Eddie Montanez** in Chicago; **Peggy** drafting a teammate in NYC; elite handcrankers enter Brooklyn; **Jimmy King** and family at MCM; **Mariusz Gryglas** all smiles at the MCM; the team at the Marine Tourneau event; **Peggy Sprouse** cranking away; **Scott Gellerstein** in the Marine Corps Marathon; champion handcranker **Dane Pilon**; **Chris Ayres** in Chicago; ...n Beach Marathon finish line. (photos courtesy of Larry Sillen and Lee Harrison)

The New York City Chapter, led by the incomparable (and inexhaustible!) **Ellie Cox**, had a terrific fall. Among the highlights of the racing season were: **Lamar Brown**, **Carmelo Puccia**, plus **Hanley & Todd Walerstein** representing Achilles at the Harlem Renaissance Road Race on September 19; **Tyler McNeil** displaying fine form in the half marathon at Grete's Gallop; **Ellie** and **Dick Traum** accompanying **Tyler**, **Nadine**, **Ricardo**, **Marisol**, **Bob**, **Steve**, **Nano**, **Frank**, and **Carmelo** in a race through the beautiful grounds of the New York Medical Center to make an impressive showing at the Race for Rehab in Valhalla, New York; and the Terry Fox Run on October 17, a race with special meaning for Achilles, as the young amputee Terry Fox was inspired to run across Canada by seeing pictures of Dick Traum doing the NYC Marathon on his prosthetic leg in 1976. Among the Achilles competitors was **Tucker Salovaara**. Achilles athletes were well represented in the 5th Avenue Mile. **Lamar Brown** blazed down 5th Avenue in a time of 5:58, while **Dan Trush** (who began as an Achilles Kid and is now the director of his own non-profit Daniel's Music Foundation) and Karen Lewis walked together. **Helene Hines** and **Ricardo Corral** competed in handcranks.

On Saturday, December 12 **Ricardo Corral**, **Lamar Brown** with guide **Robin Harding**, **Dale Layne** with guide **Stephanie Wilson**, **Irwin Ramirez** with a thrilled and speedy **Ellie Cox**, and **Carmelo Puccia** with guide **Katherine Kneier** participated in the Holiday 4 miler in Prospect Park. Congrats to all!

Members of the NYC Chapter had the opportunity to give back to Central Park by working with the Central Park Conservancy (CPC) to clear leaves and brush along Fifth Avenue. The morning of volunteering was donated in honor of **Ira Millstein**, a life trustee of the CPC. Ira was the recipient of the **Albert H. Gordon Award** at the 2009 Achilles Gala, held on the Thursday before the NYC Marathon.

#### Tri-Team

One of the most exciting developments of the past several months has been the renaissance of the Tri team under the leadership of **Heidi Chadwick**. Heidi reports the following late season results: **Jack Chen** rounded out his first Tri season with a strong finish at the Olympic distance Westchester Triathlon on 9/27. Rain and rough surf tested the competitors, but luckily Jack has had some experience racing in the rain. His efforts were rewarded with a 3:27 finish, second place in the PC division. Jack was guided by the amazing **Matt Malina**, whose buoyant spirits in wet weather helped Jack stay positive on the hilly, challenging course. Matt himself is coming off an open water swim season of several top-ten finishes and has been such a valuable asset to our program. Hot off the press, **Lamar Brown** stormed the Central Park Duathlon on October 4 with a time of 1:17. This time obviously speaks for itself and was good enough for second place in his division. The distance was Run 2, Bike 12, and then Run 2. Lamar was guided by super strong perennial volunteer, **Jorge Sarmiento**. Jorge has guided **Eddie Montanez** this year to an ITU World Championship qualifying time at NYCT. He guided Jack to a first place PC Division at Bridgeport, and guided Carlos to his first Tri finish ever at Flushing Meadow, which included some serious body blocking in the water. There's something about Jorge that seems to bring great results.

There's also something about **HEIDI!** Her leadership, the help of the team's incredible volunteers and guides, and the talent and commitment of our athletes, has been a recipe for an immensely successful season for Achilles Tri.

#### Kayak Marathon

On October 18, 2009, Achilles participated in the Mayor's Cup New York City Kayak Championships. **Joe Traum** worked closely with race organizer **Ray Fusco** and the New York City Sports Commission to make sure that athletes with disabilities had the opportunity to participate. Though inclement weather forced most of the Achilles athletes to withdraw from the race, **Mike Blair**, a member of the Freedom Team, was allowed to compete and stunned the field by coming in first in the tandem division. Mike recounted his journey to the finish line below with guide **Marcus Demuth** [slightly edited for length]:



Clockwise from top left: **Nano** and **Ricardo** in C Race for Rehab; **Helene Hines**, **Nihal Erkan**, marathon; **Mike Blair** and **Marcus Demuth**, Mayors Cup Kayak Marathon; **Carmelo**

# PTER NEWS



In the early afternoon on Friday my wife **Delissa** and daughter **Mirabella** drove to NYC. Arriving fairly late in the evening we stopped at Gallagher's Steak House for dinner. We ordered very conservatively, when the maitre d' came to our table to inform us that a very generous man had covered our tab at which time he walked up and thanked me for my service. Thank you sir! On Saturday night we met the rest of the team at the Cornell Club, a beautiful establishment. Everyone was very excited about the coming race and we spent time getting to know each other before heading back to the Union League Club for a good night's rest.

Upon arriving with volunteers **Gary Williams** and **Robin Francis** the morning of the race around 0545 I realized I was a little under dressed for the rain. I found a rain slicker amongst our gear. It was a light drizzle with a gusty wind that could have easily chilled me to the bone had the slicker not been there. Upon arriving on the scene my teammate Marcus took charge and brought us to the check-in for registration. We spent the next hour preparing for the race. Just as we were making some final preparations on the boat there was a dramatic turn of events. Around 0730 they announced that the race had been cancelled for all but the elite. There was a moment when everyone was very bummed out. **Ray Fusco** got up to talk about the decision and began to cry. He was torn up that that he was only going to be able to allow the elite boaters to compete. Then there was a brief 'ray of light'! Ray said that he had 24 bibs left to allocate for people who were committed and experienced enough to handle the horrible conditions (a steady 28 knot wind coming head on and serious rain). Marcus and I decided that as long as we had a good boat we would paddle together.



We stood in line and when it was our turn I said, "Ray, I'm in a sea kayak and just paddled the Grand Canyon so whenever you are done with the surf skis let us know!" He immediately yelled, "hey Marcus you're in!" We got our bib and got in our boat. We had never paddled together and had talked a bit about strategy, but mostly our desire to win! We were the last tandem boat out the gate, backing off to avoid clipping the tandem outrigger directly in front of us, but it didn't take us long to steadily gain the lead. After the first two miles we were in the lead. It was grueling and I was glad I had my sunglasses because they kept the rain and sea spray from burning my eyes. With every crest of the waves I was pounded in the chest and sprayed by the wind and rain. At one point after four or five miles I saw a white and red tandem off our starboard bow and I kicked up the pace. It seemed like forever before we reached the George Washington Bridge, and an eternity before we finally made the turn taking us past Columbia University. I was looking forward to the flatwater up ahead but was sorely disappointed that not only was there a current, but we were still having to fight it, about 2 miles an hour in our direction. We stuck to the eddies and Marcus navigated us through some tight spots to keep us near the shore and out of the main flow. Every inch of travel was a struggle against the forces of nature. I was experiencing excruciating pain in my left hand and wrist and coming down the back stretch my wrist was throbbing. I did not want to keep going. Marcus insisted that we win this thing. He gave me a minute long break and told me to massage it and so I did. After a while I returned the favor telling him to take a break and I continued pulling us through the water. Passing through Hell's Gate we expected the current to whisk us downstream, but nothing could be further from the truth. With the pain in my wrist getting worse I was looking desperately toward the horizon. I wanted to see the end and even more I wanted to see the Statue of Liberty.



Central Park; **Ellie Cox** and **Bob Skaretka** at the  
**Staci Alziebler** & **Tessa Werner** at the kayak  
1st place winners of the Double Kayak 2009  
**Enelo Puccia** at the Race for Rehab.

Finally we crested that turn and it was like an inspiration. I was truly invigorated. We made that last turn up the Hudson, which I could say was absolutely the most miserable time of my life. Every stroke brought us forward a few inches, but the wind shot us backward and we had to dig deep and really paddle that boat to not only keep it moving forward but to keep from capsizing. What Marcus said was going to be fifteen minutes seemed like the longest fifteen minutes of my life. We finally rolled out of the chop and into the dock area to win the tandem division and receive the Challenged Division trophy and cash on behalf of TEAM ACHILLES with a time of 5:10:53! I want to thank **Dick Traum** and the whole team, Joe, Marcus, Peter, Gary, Robin, Nihal, Ricardo, Helene, Phil, and Margaret! Everyone was integral to the mission. I am proud to be a member of the Achilles Freedom Team! It feels great to be a winner! Thanks Marcus for pushing me all the way to victory!

# ACHILLES KIDS KORNER

## Achilles Kids School Program

In addition to our longstanding chapters headed by our wonderful and dedicated teachers throughout New York City, NY; Tuscaloosa, AL; Roanoke, VA; and San Diego, CA, we are delighted to welcome several new school districts to Achilles Kids – Bronxville, NY (headed by **Matt Fisher**), Eastchester, NY (**Jason Karol**), Providence, RI, (**Mary Cooper**), and Palm Beach, FL (**Eric Stern**). Also - another new program has joined our ranks here in Manhattan – MS 258, headed by Physical Therapist **Allan Monteron** and classroom teacher **Terry Peters**. These new chapters have introduced more than 250 new students to the joy of running, bringing the total number of Achilles Kids nationwide to nearly 4,000. Jason Karol's students, who meet every day for 45 minutes, had already completed their first virtual marathon by mid-November! At that rate, Jason's students will each run three or possibly four marathons by year's end. Talk about ULTRA-marathoners! And according to Matt Fisher, his students "come to class excited to run, and are preparing themselves for a healthy lifestyle down the road."

That's precisely our mission and our goal! We are incredibly excited that Achilles Kids is helping children with disabilities improve their fitness, strength, mobility, and self-esteem. We're also proud that Achilles Kids is well on its way to becoming a truly national program. It is with thanks to the AWESOME teachers who put in a huge amount of time and effort throughout the year and to our generous sponsors who make it all possible! And of course our most heartfelt thanks go to the kids, who face struggles no child should have to endure with strength beyond their years. Their refusal to set limits on what they can accomplish inspires us every day.

## Achilles Kids Year Round Program

Achilles had quite a presence at the 5th Avenue Mile on Saturday September 26. We were especially proud of our competitors from Achilles Kids: **Idriss, Adam, Kane, Dusty, Cesar, Robert, and Eilish**.



Top to Bottom: Bronxville Chapter, headed by **Matt Fisher**; **Hannah** outrunning her sister **Adele**; **Shael** working on his Thanksgiving masterpiece.

All did their very best and crossed the finish line to rousing cheers of support. For many of the young athletes, it was the longest distance they have yet run and they were filled with pride as they received their post race ribbon and water bottle. This was the first race Achilles Kids were officially timed using the NYRR D-Tag system. They were so excited to check their finish times on the computer -- just like the adults. Achilles Kids was back in Central Park in October for Greta's Troll Stroll and the Terry Fox run.

Themed weekend workouts at the JCC continue to help children with disabilities and their able-bodied siblings be active and have fun. Events included the Autumn Fun Run, where Achilles Kids colored turkeys and said what they were thankful for and the Mini Marathon, where the kids ran 26.2 laps wearing their very own race bibs. The always festive holiday party on December 12 was an excellent way to greet the New Year.

Most exciting for Achilles Kids this fall, many members of the Achilles Kids family were involved in the ING NYC Marathon on November 1. **Tyler** and **Nadine McNeil** continued their winning ways with both finishing in PR time: 4:58 for Tyler and 3:33 for Nadine. Tyler ran with a group of terrific guides and Nadine conquered all five boroughs on her handcrank. Achilles Kids volunteer **Drew Stadler** ran his first marathon while raising funds to support our

work. He finished in a very impressive time of 3:50. **Sean Herlihy**, dad to Achilles Kid Eilish, ran his second marathon in 4:01, cheered on by his family. On the Friday evening before the marathon, **Julian Kane** was honored with the Steven R. Fastenberg Award for Outstanding Achilles Kids Participant.

During this Holiday Season, while we take stock of all the many gifts in our life, we are especially mindful of the wonderful contributions that our volunteers, kids, and their families make to our program. We send all involved with Achilles Kids the warmest and most heartfelt wishes for a happy and healthy holiday season!

## Achilles Kids Upcoming Events at the Jewish Community Center

334 Amsterdam Avenue @ 76th St 9:30 AM - 12:15 PM

Jan 16: Achilles Kids New Year Fun Run

Feb 20: Achilles Kids Super Bowl Fun Run

Mar 13: Achilles Kids St. Patrick's Day Fun Run

Jan 30: Achilles Kids President's Day Run

Feb 27: Achilles Kids Read & 'Rite Fun Run

Mar 27: Achilles Kids March Madness Fun Run



# ACHILLES INTERNATIONAL

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New York, NY 10018  
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[info@international.org](mailto:info@international.org)

## ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



**1st Place Handcyclist Helene Hines breaking the finish line tape at the 2009 ING NYC Marathon!**

- A** Ambition to focus on strengths
- C** Caring to learn about others different from you
- H** Helping others to achieve their new goals
- I** Inspiration that fuels an uphill push
- L** Learning about our sport
- L** Loving life with all its challenges
- E** Emerging each day with a fresh start
- S** Support from the team, for the team

## LATEST NEWS & UPCOMING EVENTS

### NYC Marathon 2010

The 2010 ING NYC Marathon application is now up. IF YOU ARE ABLE TO please register by lottery by March 5, 2010. <https://webapps.ingnycmarathon.org/ingnycmarathon2010/Login.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2fingnycmarathon2010%2fDefault.aspx>

\*\*\* If you encounter any problems registering or need your password and ID contact Gerle Shagdar at: [gshagdar@achillesinternational.org](mailto:gshagdar@achillesinternational.org)

\*\*\*if you are an international athlete please contact Gerle

\*\*\*If you are a FT member please contact Genna

\*\*\*If your disability makes filling out the online application impossible please send in a paper application to Gerle Shagdar's attention at 42 West 38th Street, Suite 400, NY, NY 10018.

Alternatively, you can stop by the office (Monday-Friday 10:00 am -5:00 pm). It is a good idea to call before stopping by.

**PLEASE include your disability on your application (there is not a spot for this, please fill it in).**

\*\*\*Achilles will only sponsor active members who are committed to doing the necessary training and preparation.

\*\*\*If you are a sponsored Achilles athlete and you drop out of the ING NYC Marathon without communicating with someone at the central office, you are responsible for reimbursing the entry fee to Achilles.

\*\*\*Please fill out ATC in the box labeled TEAM.

Achilles is in the process of updating our database. Please call (212-354-0300) or email us to ensure that we have your most up-to-date contact information.

### HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

The Holiday Season is upon us. Start the New Year off right – by making a fully tax deductible gift to Achilles. Your donation will truly help change someone's life. Mail a check to:

Achilles International  
42 West 38th Street, Suite 400, NY, NY 10018  
or online at:

[http://www.nycharities.org/donate/c\\_donate.asp?CharityCode=1946](http://www.nycharities.org/donate/c_donate.asp?CharityCode=1946)

### Upcoming Events

<b>Disney Half-Marathon</b>	Jan 9
<b>Miami Marathon</b>	Jan 31
<b>A1A Ft. Lauderdale Marathon</b>	Feb 21
<b>LA Marathon</b>	Mar 21
<b>Boston Marathon</b>	Apr 19

**For more information, please call 212-354-0300**