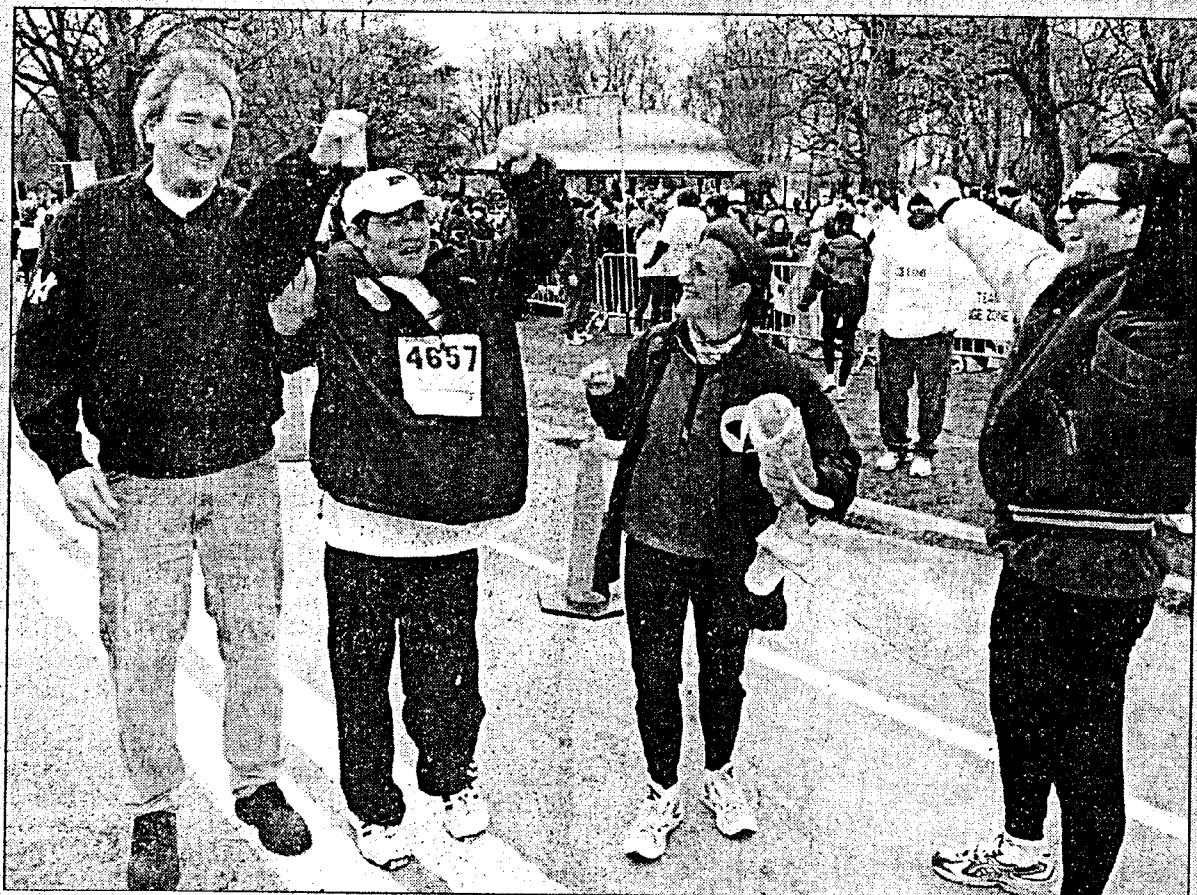


DRAMATIC RECOVERY



STEPHEN CHERNIN/ASSOCIATED PRESS

STEVE POSTLER, left, supports his nephew Dan Trush, 16, after he completed a 5-mile walk Sunday in Brooklyn. Leslie Martino, one of Dan's teachers, and David Wolf, Dan's trainer, celebrate his accomplishment.

5-mile walk caps teen's uphill journey

Dan Trush overcomes brain injury that had left him in a coma for 30 days in 1997

By **BETH J. HARPAZ**
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Four years ago, Dan Trush nearly died after he collapsed from a ruptured aneurysm in the brain.

"He was in a coma for 30 days," recalled his father, Ken Trush. "The doctors sent me home and said, 'Get your family. We don't think he's going to make it.'"

But on Sunday, the handsome 16-year-old with a great sense of humor completed a 5-mile marathon walk surrounded by friends and relatives who have been inspired by his amazing journey of recovery.

"Dan the man!" spectators shouted, raising their hands to slap him five

times on the back. The walk took place at Prospect Park on Sunday as a participant in the Achilles Marathon. The marathon includes people with a wide range of disabilities, from amputees with prosthetic feet to wheelchair racers to recovering drug addicts.

Dan's road to Prospect Park began at Beth Israel Medical Center, with the surgeons who saved his life, draining fluid from his brain and removing four more aneurysms after he collapsed on March 9, 1997. He was hospitalized for 341 days and shrank to 65 pounds; his first therapy sessions involved learning to sit in a wheelchair without falling over.

"If someone would have said to me then, 'Your son will walk five miles in four years,' I would have been incredulous," his father said.

In July 1998, Dan got involved with the Achilles Track Club, an organization that encourages people with disabilities to participate in athletics.

"50 feet," Dan recalled.

Gradually, and with the help of David Wolf, a competitive runner who had survived a traumatic brain injury as a teenager, Dan began walking longer and longer distances.

"Now I usually go about one and a half to two miles," Dan said of his twice-weekly workouts in Central Park. Sunday's 5-mile effort was his longest to date.

"You want to keep raising the bar," said his mother, Nancy Trush. "We love him as he is, of course, but we also have hope for tomorrow."

Dan still has muscular problems in his right leg and left arm, and he is working to improve his memory.

"But he's just continuing to progress year after year," said his mother. "They said he would never see, never walk, never talk. Nobody could believe he'd be doing this. He's a very determined boy, and he never gives