

Achilles Track Club: Strides that make a difference

By Dan Clements,
for Neighbors

The Achilles Track Club, Madison Chapter, is part of an international non-profit track club that enables people with all types of disabilities to participate in mainstream athletics to promote personal achievement.

Since its founding in New York City in 1983, ATC has expanded into 40 chapters in the US and over 110 chapters on six continents; Kimberly Virden founded the Madison Chapter in 2005.

Virden describes the Achilles Track Club (ATC) as “a running/walking/wheelchairing club for athletes with disabilities.” Virden says that along with achievement, the members experience enhanced self-esteem and the lowering of barriers between people for members and volunteers alike.

ATC includes members with visual impairment, cerebral palsy, paraplegia, arthritis, cystic fibrosis, cancer, multiple sclerosis, and hearing impairment, as well as amputees and people who have had traumatic brain injuries, epilepsy, strokes and organ transplants. Virden emphasizes that members have “stories of overcoming the

The ATC Madison Chapter hosts group runs at 5:45 p.m. every Thursday at the Fleet Feet



Achilles Track Club provides the opportunity for athletes with physical disabilities to be active in a supportive, non-competitive environment.

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and the Capitol Mile in downtown Madison on July 29. There are currently about 24 members in the Madison Chapter of Achilles Track Club and ATC is always looking for new members.

expenses to go to some of the races, such as to Minnesota and New York.

Participation in the organization is growing; last year, nine members went to New York's “Hope and Possibility” race; this year,

runs at 5:45 p.m. every Thursday at the Fleet Feet Sports store, 8449 Old Sauk Road, on Madison's West side.

Membership in Achilles is free and includes coaching, team T-shirts, workouts,