

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Celebrating the Start Line





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MarathonFoto

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Mission

Achilles International is a leading adaptive running nonprofit that transforms the lives of youth, adults and veterans with disabilities through athletic programs and social connection.

In January 2023, Achilles celebrated 40 years of breaking down barriers to the start line by ringing the Nasdaq Stock Market Opening Bell in New York. Members of the community shared their favorite memories on social media using #MyAchillesMile.



IMPACT IN 2023

62

CHAPTERS
WORLDWIDE



FLAGSHIP CITIES



BOSTON



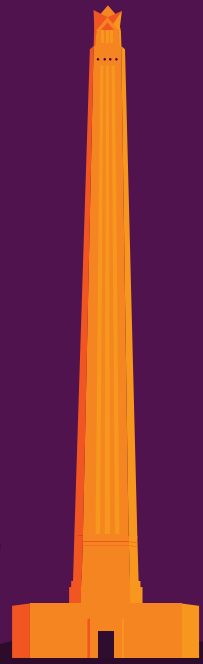
CHICAGO



WASHINGTON
D.C.



NEW YORK



HOUSTON

634

CHECK-INS

MOST
WORKOUT CHECK-INS
IN ONE MONTH
(Achilles New Jersey)



12 HOURS

LONGEST WALKATHON/
RUNATHON/ROLLATHON
(Achilles Denver)



1,472

RESERVATIONS OF ADAPTIVE CYCLING
EQUIPMENT IN NYC

Sponsored by Citi Bike® Lyft



100 VETERANS'
LIVES CHANGED



1,530

WORKOUTS
HELD GLOBALLY
Outside of the U.S.



1,940

WORKOUTS HELD
IN THE U.S.

★ START ★

875

START LINES CROSSED
on the Achilles Marathon
Tour by athletes, guides and
charity runners



6,885

ACHILLES HOPE
& POSSIBILITY®
FINISHERS IN NYC



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO

Celebrate the Start Line



Celebration so often centers around crossing a finish line. To finish something is exhilarating, whether it be a year, a goal, a workout or a race. As incredible as a finish is, however, I want to **celebrate the start line**. Despite endless responsibilities, societal crises and personal challenges, thousands of community members still chose to run, walk and roll with Achilles International in 2023. They started a journey and uncovered something new within themselves.

Each one who made the choice to join us had their own personal “why.” Maybe it was to build a new community of friends. Maybe it was to run in honor of a loved one. Or maybe it was to shatter any doubts on what is possible.

The first step to the finish line begins with the decision to start. The impact we can have to transform more lives starts with you. With every push, step and sprint we take together, our world becomes a more inclusive place.

Our work is not finished until everyone gets a chance to start.

I have the great privilege to represent a community founded on hope and possibility every day. The Achilles neon yellow jersey is a bright symbol of unity and inclusion and a reminder of how sport can bring us together. When we step out into the world wearing neon yellow, we instantly become teammates.

As you may know, an estimated one in six people worldwide lives with a disability. That’s a neighbor, a friend, a loved one, or even you, the reader. We hope that you will extend an invitation to others to join us in feeling the positive energy of movement.

Remember, **your finish line could be someone else’s start line.**

Thank you for supporting the Achilles community.

Sincerely,

Emily Glasser
President and CEO



Cheer Everywhere

WHY ACHILLES

“Achilles is so important because the organization gives me opportunities to be around other adaptive athletes. It introduced me to handcycling, which prompted my sports journey and allowed me to compete on a stage that is much bigger than me.”

Rome Leykin, Achilles Athlete and Donor

ACHILLES KIDS SPOTLIGHT

From Isolation to Community: Henry and Joanne Delli Santi, Team Achilles Kids



Get involved at [achillesinternational.org/achilles-kids](https://www.achillesinternational.org/achilles-kids)

In some settings, 11-year-old Henry might be viewed as “different.” Not at an Achilles workout though.

“If you are a parent of a child with special needs in a typical world or a typical school, you can often feel isolated. Other parents are very kind but some might feel sorry for you or stay away because they don’t know what to do,” says Joanne Delli Santi, a Team Achilles Kids parent.

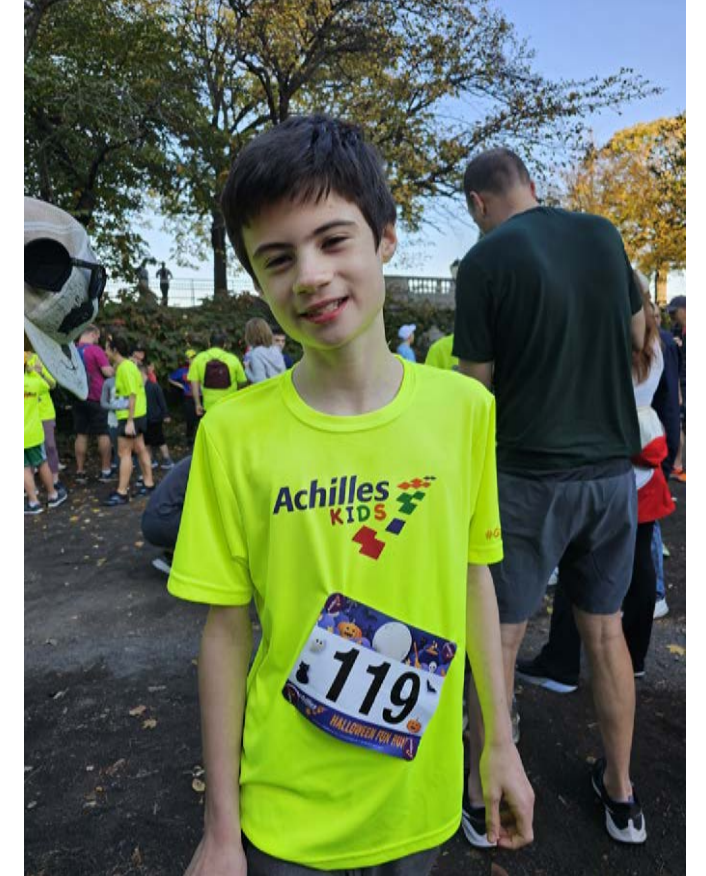
“Achilles creates a community where you can be around other parents going through the same thing as you. Everyone is so understanding. It’s such an empowering thing for us both,” she says.

Joanne first learned about Achilles from Henry’s physical therapy teacher, a volunteer guide with Achilles. He has looked forward to his Saturday morning workouts in Central Park in New York ever since.

“A lot of children with special needs like Henry don’t like loud noises so group activities and sports are challenging. An individual sport like running allows them to be successful at their own rate and is much easier to organize. It is something anyone can do as we can see from Achilles wheelchair athletes and blind athletes,” says Joanne, a recurring donor to Achilles.

The family has been a part of the program for over two years. Joanne says she has experienced first hand the difference it has made in her son’s life.

“The Achilles Kids program has had such an impact on Henry both socially and physically. I have noticed that his recall has improved and his coordination and gross motor skills have gotten so much better. Achilles provides both a social and a physical outlet that means so much to the children and their families,” she says. “Knowing that there are other people outside of the family circle that care, means everything.”



“Achilles creates a community where you can be around other parents going through the same thing as you. Everyone is so understanding. It’s such an empowering thing for us both.”

Joanne Delli Santi

RUN TO LEARN SPOTLIGHT

Meet the Phys Ed Teachers Creating Cultures of Inclusion on Campus

Achilles Kids: Run To Learn is a free school-based program for students in preschool through high school that integrates professionally developed lesson plans into running, walking or wheeling workouts for those who may use a wheelchair or an adaptive bicycle.

Meaghan Healey and Carolyn Ferguson, physical education teachers at South Side High School and South Side Middle School in the Rockville Centre School District in New York, have utilized the program with their students with special needs and developmental disabilities for over 10 years. They say the true impact however, reaches far beyond their students. It becomes an annual community celebration of their accomplishments.

“For the kids to be able to make a connection outside of school is rewarding as well as the recognition they get from their peers at the end of the year. There is an inclusivity piece that also touches the adults and other students who participate in our annual celebration,” says Meaghan. “Whether they are doing a heart pumping activity, or a half mile, Achilles provides attainable goals for each day that they can work at their own pace.”

George Svejda, a physical education teacher at Brooke Grove Elementary School in Maryland’s largest school district, agrees.



“We need to educate the public about how people with disabilities can participate in anything they put their mind to. This program is changing the culture and the expectations around what kids with disabilities can do. It’s very powerful to be able to show parents the data of what their children accomplished. A lot of my kids don’t feel like they have the opportunity to move outside the program with long 45 minute commutes to the classroom,” he says.

From pool noodles and popsicle sticks to music themed runs, George has leveraged his creativity and 26 years of experience to get kids active across the schools he has taught in.

“Sometimes parents don’t hear anything positive about their child. I am able to share positive concrete data about something positive they have done with me thanks to Achilles’ programming. One father didn’t know his fifth grade daughter could run. He was in tears at graduation last year and started going to the track walking and jogging with her,” says George.

ACHILLES KIDS

Run to Learn Program



52,679
MILES LOGGED



122 across **14**
SCHOOLS STATES



8,396
STUDENTS

Get involved at [achillesinternational.org/run-to-learn](https://www.achillesinternational.org/run-to-learn)

ACHILLES ATHLETE SPOTLIGHT

Seeing A Dream Come True: Francisco Hernandez, Achilles Mexico

Running was always a favorite hobby for Francisco Hernandez of Mexico City, but the sport turned into a life line after he lost his sight.

The former police officer was struck by a stray bullet during an assault on his way home from work in 1995. The bullet, which remains lodged, penetrated his right eye. The shot shattered his right eye and damaged the optic nerve of his left eye, leaving him blind. Later that same week, fellow officers were slain, crimes that remain unsolved to this day. For years following the shootings, he felt a sense of denial and depression.

“I didn’t want to be a burden to anyone,” he says.

When he learned about the Mexican Paralympic Committee and that it was still possible to participate in the sport he loved with a guide, his mindset shifted. When he found a new community, his spirit soared.

Get involved at [achillesinternational.org/find-a-chapter](https://www.achillesinternational.org/find-a-chapter)

“I came to Achilles International in 2018, and the experience has reinvigorated me. I’ve felt supported from Day One,” says Francisco, an Achilles Mexico athlete better known to his teammates as “El Toro” (Spanish for the Bull).

Thanks to the training and support of the chapter, his competitive drive was reawakened. For a while, it was a challenge to find a guide who could keep up with his consistently strong paces. The bond he formed with volunteer Brianda Rascon has been unmatched, with the pair pushing each other to their best.

“When I run with a good guide, I don’t feel impaired. It is a feeling of freedom,” he says.

Through financial barriers and the unpredictable cancellations of the pandemic, Hernandez’s belief in destiny was unwavering. In April 2023 he completed his lifelong dream crossing the finish line of the Boston Marathon thanks to Achilles. For athletes like Francisco, the journey to the start line uncovers a new sense of belief.

Read Francisco’s story in [ESPN](#) online.

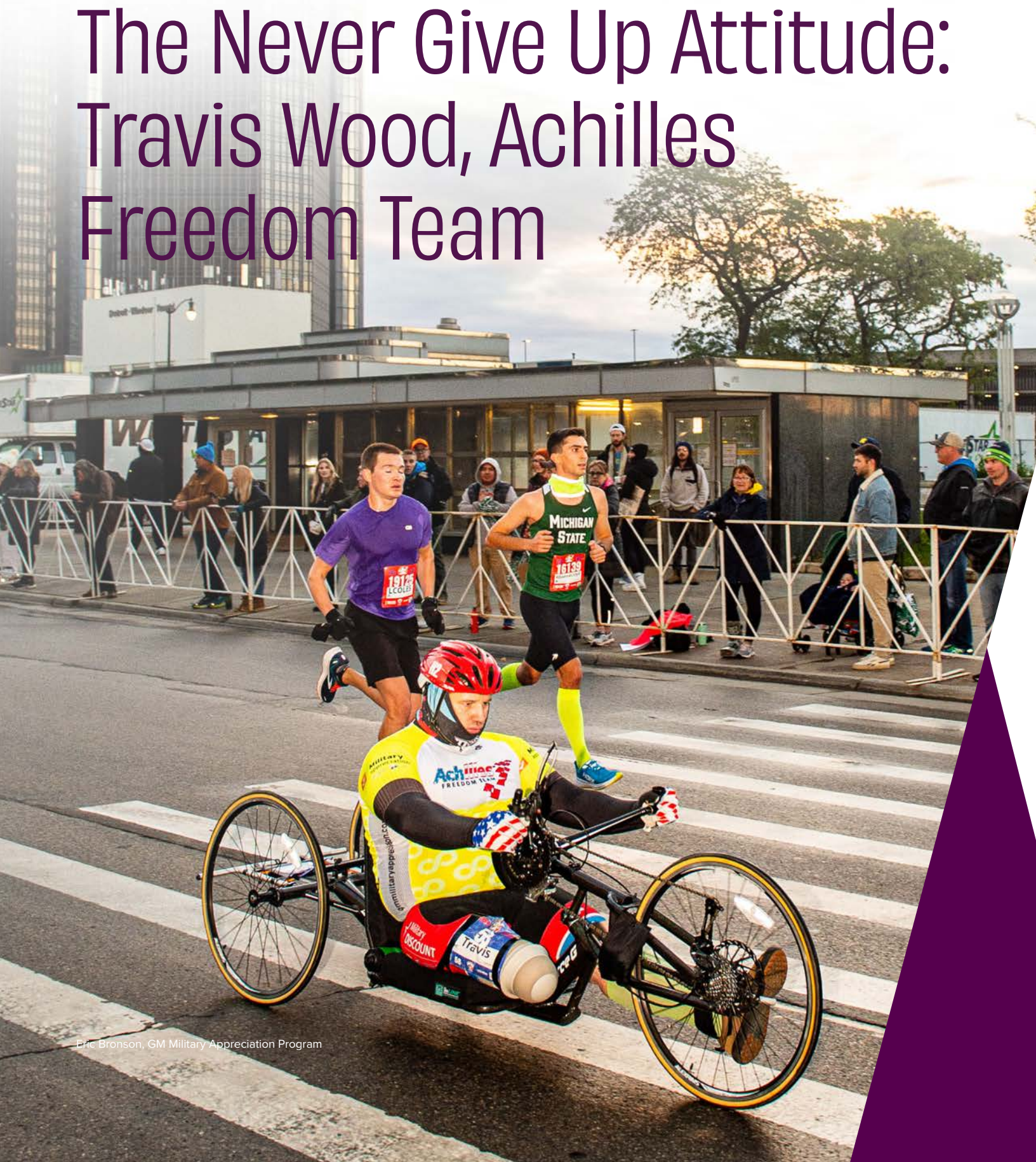
“When I run
with a good
guide, I don’t
feel impaired.
It is a feeling
of freedom.”

Francisco Hernandez



ACHILLES FREEDOM TEAM VETERAN SPOTLIGHT

The Never Give Up Attitude: Travis Wood, Achilles Freedom Team



There were many “cannots” he heard from doctors, but Travis Wood, 40, of Cedar City, UT, remembers vividly the day he met Achilles International, and the refreshing feeling of “I can.”

Travis, a former staff sergeant in the U.S. Army, was severely injured in 2007 after his vehicle was hit by a roadside bomb in Afghanistan. The explosion resulted in more than 80 surgeries and the loss of his right leg.

“Just because one door closes doesn’t mean another won’t open. Movement is life. We have unlimited resources available and all we have to do is look and start reaching for them,” he says. One day in 2008, Janet Patton, then Director of the Achilles Freedom Team, comprised of military veterans with disabilities, hosted a clinic at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center encouraging him to try handcycling. The experience unlocked a new outlook. It was the first time someone spoke to him “like normal” and awakened a spirit of competition with his friends in the hospital.

“It’s [handcycling races] now something I love to do. There’s a sense of accomplishment in a world

where you have so much going against you. It’s something you can do and accomplish, it tells your brain that you can do other things that are hard,” says Travis.

Continuing his commitment to service, Travis works as a high school teacher, particularly passionate about mentoring youth who have grown up in the foster system like he did.

“They [Achilles International] fueled my focus on seeing not what I couldn’t do anymore, but rather finding new doors to open and limits to test. It has improved every aspect of my life, most importantly my mental health. It has paved the way and aided in my capacity to return the favor as I strive to give back to my community with the youth I serve. I bring a never give up attitude to my students that I have gained in large part due to Achilles,” he says.

“Achilles meets you where you’re at and helps get you where you should be. It magnifies the gifts and talents in an environment where you can see others like you that are so much farther ahead and that gives you hope. All you have to do is continue to try.”

Get involved at [achillesinternational.org/achilles-freedom-team](https://www.achillesinternational.org/achilles-freedom-team)

Races to Remember

Every year, you may recognize us on race courses around the globe by our neon yellow jerseys and loud "Go Achilles!" cheers. In the cities where we have a major presence below, we plan a series of special team bonding gatherings and experiences that are part of what we call the *Achilles Marathon

Tour. We roll out the red carpet for Achilles athletes and military veterans of the Achilles Freedom Team in a variety of ways thanks to our sponsors to ensure race weekend is meaningful, memorable and successful.

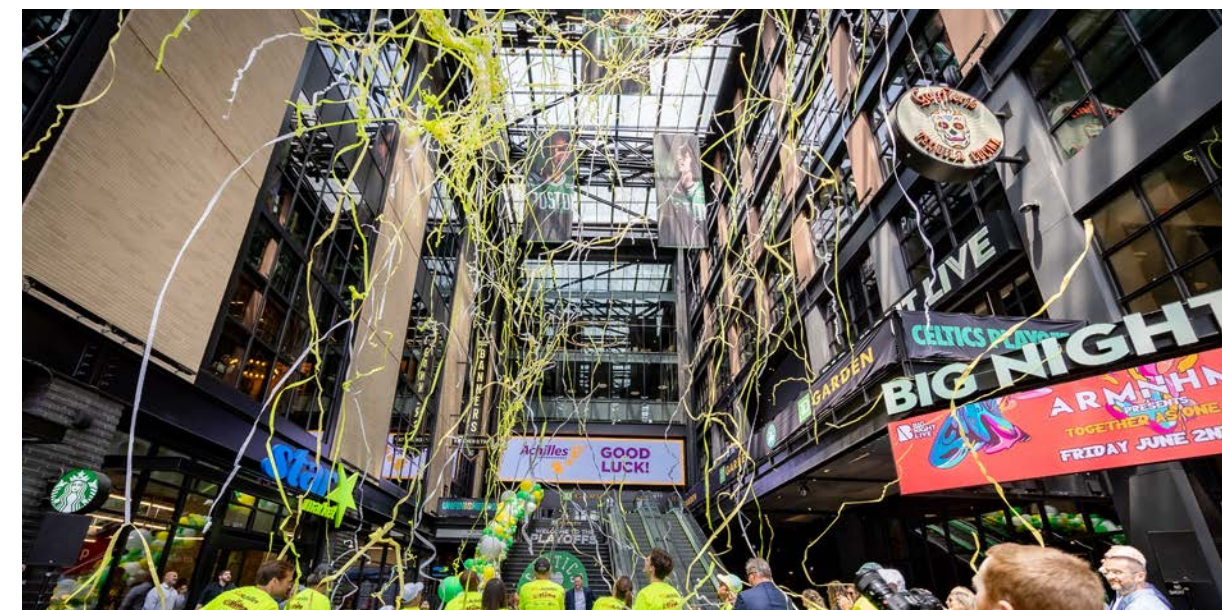


***JANUARY**
Walt Disney World® Marathon Weekend

***MARCH**
Los Angeles Marathon presented by ASICS

***APRIL**
Bank of America Boston Marathon

MAY
Achilles Relay





Anthony Quintano, TD Bank



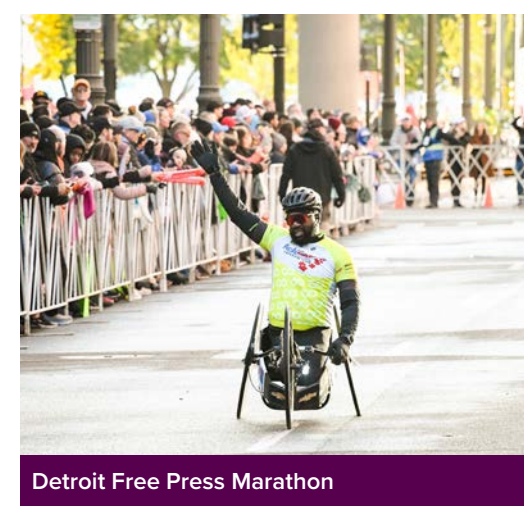
Bank of America Chicago Marathon



New York Road Runners



Anthony Quintano, TD Bank



Detroit Free Press Marathon



JUNE
Achilles Hope & Possibility® 4M Presented by TD Bank

***SEPTEMBER**
BMW Berlin Marathon

***OCTOBER**

***NOVEMBER**
TCS New York City Marathon



Marine Corps Marathon



Get involved at [achillesinternational.org/marathon-tour](https://www.achillesinternational.org/marathon-tour)

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Opening New Doors for the Disability Community: Donna and Perry Golkin



The widespread impact of Achilles International would not be possible without the continued support of The Perry & Donna Golkin Family Foundation. The family's roots with Achilles run deep, with a meaningful connection that has lasted over 15 years.

For Perry, his passion for running and a close friend's connection to the National Disability Center led to his desire to help break down barriers to sport for the disability community. For Donna, Co-Chair of Achilles Board of Directors, she saw first hand the organization's impact after her son David started volunteering as a guide in 2007.

"The first athlete he ran with is still one of our most accomplished members. Despite the obstacles presented by being blind, this individual was persistent not just in his athletic goals but also goals in every aspect of life, something that impressed David and, eventually, our family. Although I was aware of Achilles, this personal experience led me to call Achilles to offer support," says Donna.

What made her proud and stood out to her the most was the strength of the community. Donna saw firsthand how despite the challenges of the pandemic and a pivot to the virtual world, the dynamism of this group and program persisted.

"There is no better manifestation of the word diverse than Achilles. We have a large tent and welcome anyone regardless of disability. What has always impressed me is that we have best in class programming and continue to work to make it even better, coupling professionalism with warmth and a human touch. The objective here is not running per se, it is about opening up opportunities for Achilles members to participate in mainstream activities at a level that works for them," Donna says.

In 2023, Donna and Perry made a seven figure gift to help launch adaptive workouts in Staten Island, NY.

"Each and every Achilles member has a story of difficulty and determination that is inspirational. We want to open up the door to becoming part of our community by supporting more athletes [with disabilities] in more locations throughout the U.S. and around the world. The limiting factor is funding for programming and staff, but the impact of Achilles has been proven. Investing in Achilles is money well spent," she says.

While funding is important, there are many ways to get involved.

"We also hope that people will consider guiding, advocating, or just cheering our athletes on. Come watch a race or training, talk to our members and learn more," adds Donna.

"The objective here is not running per se, it is about opening up opportunities for Achilles members to participate in mainstream activities at a level that works for them."

Donna Golkin

Visit [achillesinternational.org/get-involved](https://www.achillesinternational.org/get-involved)

TEAM ACHILLES SPOTLIGHT

Honoring Her Daughter to Support Disability Community: Kelsey Byrne

Team Achilles charity runner Kelsey Byrne raced the TCS New York City Marathon in honor of her one-year-old daughter Ruby who lives with a rare genetic disorder, GATD2B-associated neurodevelopmental disorder. Kelsey raised over \$44,000 to support athletes with disabilities in her first ever marathon.



“Achilles has taught me about true perseverance, dedication, discipline — the power of getting out there and showing up,” says Kelsey, who joined Achilles as a volunteer guide in 2023. The experience inspired her to fundraise for Achilles.

“Our Ruby works harder than anyone I know. She shows up every day and inches optimistically toward small wins that come as second nature to most of us. That will always be her journey, so knowing there are organizations like Achilles to support her as she gets older is a huge source of comfort. I know they’ll not only help her reach her goals, but appreciate and celebrate her for who she is.

“In life, there is always a choice. I choose to run. I choose to push progress forward for those who struggle to move and speak and communicate in a typical way. I choose to advocate for those deserving of an active lifestyle, one that’s filled to the brim with accomplishment, achievement, and purpose.”



“Achilles Kids is very instrumental in my social, physical and mental health. In 2018, my parents brought me to Achilles because they needed help teaching me how to run, in hopes of it helping with my sensory disorder, anxiety and ADHD.

Achilles Kids was the only running program in the city for children with disabilities.”

Kieron Ragoonath
Raised over \$10,000



193
CHARITY RUNNERS



4,313
DONATIONS



\$587,675
FUNDS RAISED

Get involved at [achillesinternational.org/charity-entrant](https://www.achillesinternational.org/charity-entrant)

Partners in Disability Inclusion

Our corporate sponsors at the national and grassroots level and celebrity partners help bring us one step closer to a more inclusive start line for all athletes living with a disability. We are grateful for their continued dedication and commitment to inclusion. Together, we are transforming lives by providing greater access to all forms of adaptive running and handcycling.



Donor Roll

Based on gifts made January 1 through December 31, 2023.

\$250,000+

The Cigna Group
The Perry and Donna Golkin Family Foundation
The Gordon and Llura Gund Foundation
Lyft

\$100,000-\$249,999

HOKA
Metro Detroit Chevrolet Dealers LMA
The Moody Endowment
TD Bank

\$50,000-\$99,999

The Deerfield Foundation
The Lois E. and Neil J. Gagnon Foundation
General Motors
The Moody Foundation
Eileen and Leslie Quick
Robert Russo and Gerle Shagdar
Rich Shutran
The Sullivan Family Fund
The Town Fair Tire Foundation

\$25,000-\$49,999

The Blavatnik Family Foundation
Elizabeth Elting and Michael Burlant
Emily Glasser
Louise Glasser
The Greenstein and Mandel Family Fund
Jeffrey, Martha, and Alex Kohn
Julie and David McKenna

\$10,000-\$24,999

The Altschul Foundation
Bloomberg
The Boston Athletic Association
The Busboy Charitable Relief Fund
Robert and Jane Cremin
The Eleven Eleven Foundation
Kevin and Karen Fittinghoff
Google
The Gray Foundation
Agnes Gund
Healthcare Business Media
Michael Klein
The Dorothy Lemelson Foundation
Irving Matthews
Trisha Meili and Jim Schwarz
Alan Mulally
The Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation
Stephanie & Mark Robinson
The Thomas A. and Georgina T. Russo Family Foundation
Tyrrell and Joe Schmidt
Howard Schultz
Jill and Niraj Shah
The Slomo and Cindy Silvian Foundation
Sandra J. Solomon
Lise Strickler and Mark Gallogly

\$5,000-\$9,999

Emily H. Altschul-Miller
The Susan and Eliot Black Foundation
Katherine Borsechnik and Gene Weil
MaryEllen and Tom Branna
Erin Branna
The Stephen Colbert Americone Dream Fund
The Crane Fund for Widows and Children
Jennifer and Reuben Daniels
The Department of Veterans Affairs
Dorrian's Red Hand
Maria and Phil Ehrlich
Arlene and Edward Fox
Jon Zaidins Hermann
The JDJ Charitable Foundation
Robert Katz
Michelle Kelban
Orin Kramer
Loughlin Family Fund
The McDonough Corporation
Nationwide Mortgage Bankers Pennymac
The Maureen and Paul Rubeli Foundation
The Select Equity Group Foundation
Paul Trebilcock
Union League Club
The Walt Disney Company
Mary and Glenn Weinstein

\$2,500-\$4,999

Egen Atkinson
Bank of America
Prudence Beidler
Cathy and Scott Bortz
Courtney Campbell
Kafela Craft
Michael Dorrian
Thomas Duffy
Michael Frain
Gallery O
The June George Charitable Fund
Daniel Grabowski
Philippe Guenat
Elie Hirschfeld
Robert Hourihan
Betsy and Vladimir Jelisavcic
Christina Jenks

Harika Kasireddy
Rebecca and Bennett Lindenbaum
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Michael Mathews
Ross Moody
The New York Road Runners
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Ryan O'Connell
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The David and Lucile Packard Foundation
Grant Palmer
Joseph Patellaro
Prudential
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John Reynolds
Goldman Sachs
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Scott Silver
Cynthia and William E. Simon Jr.
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Suzanne Waltman and Martin Friedman
The Warburg Pincus Foundation
Lauren Warner and Michael Macieira
Andrew Wong
Cynthia Young and George Eberstadt

IN-KIND GIFTS

Bank of America
Boston Consulting Group
The Cigna Group
DePaul University
General Motors

Gil & Schonig CPAs, LLP
Howard Harris
HOKA
William Lehman
Neil Mellen

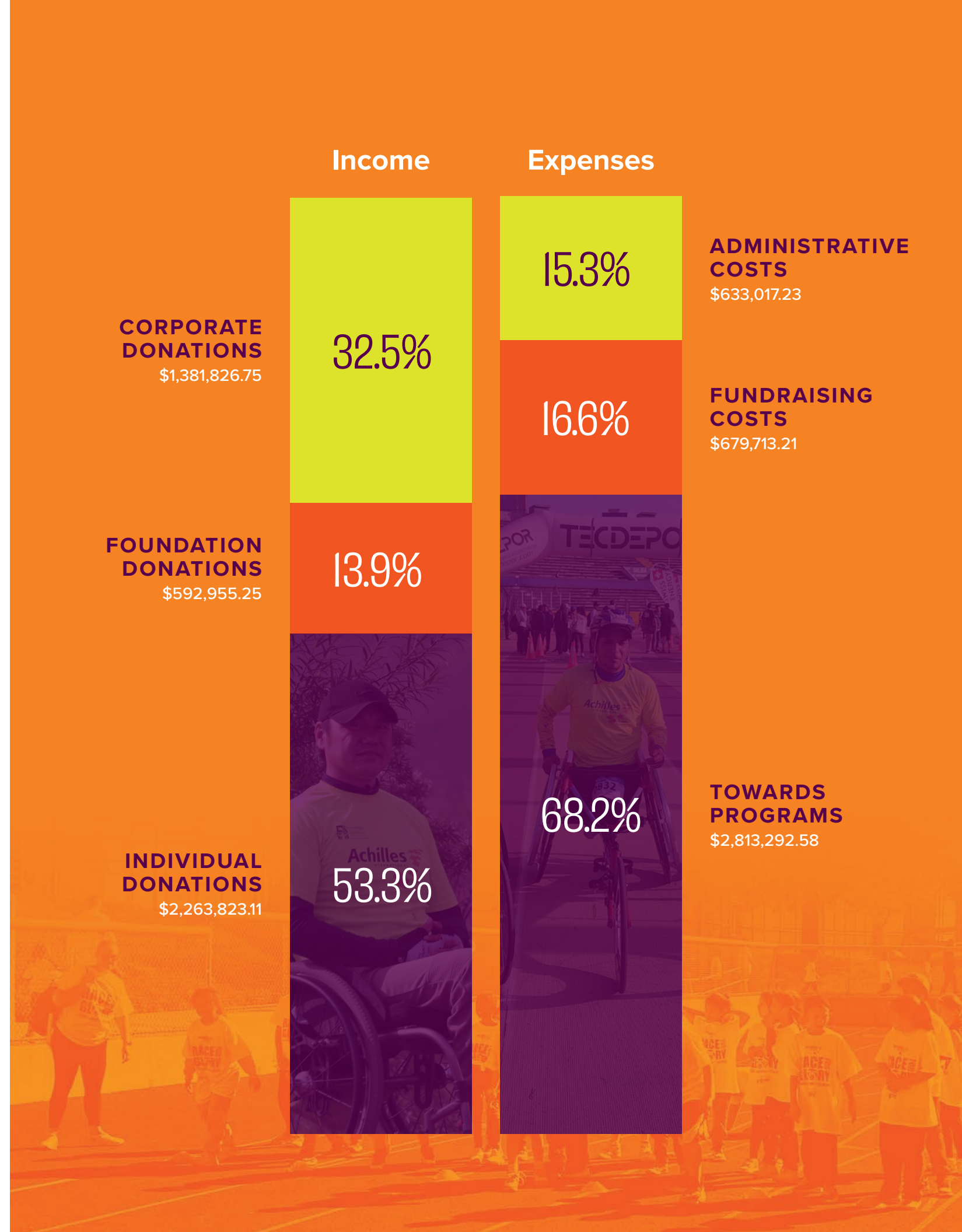
Reevemark
Shah Family Foundation
U-Haul
Winston & Strawn LLP
YANKEE LINE

Financial Highlights

Income	2023	2022
Individual	\$2,263,823.11	\$1,319,473.28
Foundations	\$592,955.25	\$291,439.64
Corporations	\$1,381,826.75	\$1,227,550.84
Government Grants	\$8,876.49	\$28,623.51
Charity Bib Program	*	\$522,664.45
Total	\$4,247,481.60	\$3,389,751.72

Expenses	2023	2022
Administration	\$633,017.23	\$698,431.63
Fundraising	\$679,713.21	\$535,894.69
Programs	\$2,813,292.58	\$2,297,955.60
Total	\$4,126,023.02	\$3,532,281.92

*Please note the income figures were categorized differently between 2022 and 2023. In 2022, the charity bib program category contained gifts from individuals, foundations and corporations. In 2023, funds raised through the charity bib program were distributed among the buckets, as appropriate.



Board of Directors

Donna Golkin, Co-Chair

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and Treasurer

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Tyrrell Schmidt, Secretary

Hank Art

Robert W. D'Loren

Alisa Fastenberg

Thomas Jenkins

Cedric King

Rebecca Lindenbaum

Trisha Meili

F. Robert Russo, Jr.

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Richard Shutran

Ross Wilson

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Janet Patton, Vice President,
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Development

Shiloh Ary, Manager,
Development

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and Communications

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Chapters and Special Projects

Michaela Cueto, Chapter Lead,
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Production and Expansion

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Boroughs Manager

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International Chapters

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Adaptive Cycling

Joseph Schneiderman, Director,
Finance and Human Resources

Jack Stanton, Major Gifts Officer

Carolyn Wynne, Brooklyn
Program Manager, Team Achilles
Kids

WHY ACHILLES

"I have learned that when you're feeling down, there is nothing better than a little exercise and a good group of people to spend time with. That is exactly what Achilles offers its members. Having that kind of support is so beneficial and so important."

Puspa Poarangan,
Achilles Athlete and Donor





"Thanks to Achilles Mexico, my mother, my sister and I found a way out of depression. I thought I couldn't run or do anything for myself. Achilles taught me that I can compete with myself, achieve my dreams and meet amazing people. With the support of

my guides I was able to run a marathon in my wheelchair and walk across the finish line. I never thought I could feel so much happiness for a goal of mine. Achilles is a loving and safe space. We found a family."

Erika Ramirez Soto,
Achilles Athlete and Donor





YOUR FINISH LINE COULD BE SOMEONE ELSE'S START LINE.

In loving memory of Richard "Dick" Traum, Founder of Achilles International



Achilles International

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📍 www.achillesinternational.org