Team With A Vision Runners Stand Out in Boston Marathon

Read profiles of some of this year’s world-class blind and visually impaired runners taking on the Boston Marathon. Team With A Vision (TWAV) members come from around the world and all walks of life to compete on the running world’s biggest stage, and raise funds and awareness for visually impaired athletes everywhere.

BROOKLINE, Mass. (PRWEB) April 11, 2018 -- The Boston Marathon features its share of memorable moments, dramatic competitions, inspirational runners, and diverse teams. One of the most courageous assemblages is Team With A Vision (TWAV), whose blind and visually impaired runners (and their sighted guides) come from around the world and all walks of life to compete on the running world's biggest stage. The team, fielded by the Massachusetts Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (MABVI) as a member of the Boston Athletic Association Boston Marathon Official Charity Program, is celebrating its 25th year of raising funds and awareness for the visually impaired. This year’s team includes a number of standouts.

Becky Andrews of Utah is a licensed clinical mental health counselor, and with her husband, Steve, built Resilient Solutions, Inc. in 2006, and shortly after, Resilient Center for Grieving Families. She serves as chair of the national alumni board for Guide Dogs for the Blind, is past president of the Utah Chapter of the Foundation Fighting Blindness, and a frequent presenter on Finding your Resilience. Becky conducts training for schools, corporations, and community meetings. She was Wasatch Woman in 2011 and in 2013, and received the National Mother of Achievement Award.

Diane Berberian is a woman who knows no limits. Living with Macular Degeneration (MD), she has become one of the most celebrated and successful female Ironman athletes in the sport. Diane’s Paratriathlon career has earned her the nickname, “The Iron Maven,” and she is an avid Ironman competitor. Diane qualified for the USA National Paratriathlon Team in 2013 and earned the title of TRI6B National Paratriathlon Champion. She placed 5th overall at the ITU Paratriathlon Worlds, won the National Championship for Visually Impaired Females at the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Half Marathon in Washington, DC in 2014, then won the Para Division of the Beach 2 Battleship Half Ironman. Diane can be found coaching peers with disabilities, and works as a Physical Therapist.

Jason Dunkerley of Ottawa, Ontario has proudly represented Canada at 5 Paralympic Games, and is a five-time medalist in middle distance track for runners who are blind. Jason grew up in Northern Ireland, and now works for the Canadian federal public service as a Junior Analyst with Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada. He gives back through his work promoting inclusive physical activity with the Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability, as one of the founding members and current President of the Achilles Ottawa running club for athletes who are blind and visually impaired, and as a board member with the Ontario Blind Sports Association.

Thomas Panek of Yorktown, NY learned at age 20 that he would lose his eyesight, and vowed that his disability would not prevent him from living a full life. Thomas is President and CEO of Guiding Eyes for the Blind, which provides guide dogs to individuals with vision loss, as well as service dogs for children with autism. He is passionate about connecting exceptional dogs with individuals and families for greater independence. He has also completed a dozen marathons since he lost his sight, including 3 previous Boston Marathons.

Jason Romero of Denver, CO was raised with his brother by a single mother, and was diagnosed with Retinitis
Pigmentosa, an incurable degenerative retinal disease. He discovered endurance sports and ran his first marathon in law school. He began training for his first marathon in 1993, and would have his mother drive him to Boulder, then run to Denver on the shoulder of the highway without water, food, sunscreen, or a cell phone. Jason has since set many world records and won medals in the Paralympics, and became the first athlete who is visually impaired to race from LA to NYC in 60 days 10 hours, for a total of 3,063 miles.

Randy Pierce has faced his challenges in a big way—even after being rendered blind and confined to a wheelchair by a neurological disease at 22 years old. He learned to walk, then run, again. He has been featured in numerous media outlets, including HBO’s Inside the NFL—even inducted into the VISA Hall of Fans at the Pro Football Hall of Fame for his devotion to the New England Patriots—and was named one of Oberto’s “Heroes of Summer” for his Tough Mudder performances in 2015. A sports enthusiast with a 2nd-degree black belt in karate, he became the first blind hiker to summit all 48 of the New Hampshire 4,000-footers during the summer and winter, and has climbed Mount Kilimanjaro. In 2015 he ran his first Boston Marathon as a member of Team With A Vision, and in 2017, Randy was one of six to take part in Ragnar’s “Reach The Beach” New Hampshire Ultra-Distance All-Visually Impaired team.

2018 will mark the 25th consecutive year in which MABVI has fielded Team With A Vision for the Boston Marathon. The team’s runners come from all over the United States, as well as Canada, France, and the United Kingdom.

“We are inspired and supported by these incredible athletes every year,” said Barbara Salisbury, CEO of the Massachusetts Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (MABVI). “They are proving that with the right support, people who are visually impaired can do anything they set their minds to.”

In addition to the Boston Marathon, MABVI has also fielded a group of teen and young adult VI runners, Junior Team With A Vision, to compete in the B.A.A. 5K race.

ABOUT MABVI AND TEAM WITH A VISION

Team With A Vision was created to raise funds and awareness for MABVI and to promote greater involvement of visually impaired runners in the Boston Marathon. MABVI works to show that disabilities, like other challenges, can be overcome in the world of sport, and by translation, in any setting. The team is a proud member of the Boston Athletic Association Boston Marathon Official Charity Program.

Massachusetts Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (MABVI) is the oldest social service organization in the country that serves adults and elders who are blind or visually impaired. They provide vision rehabilitation services and partner with community and medical groups to create high-impact, cost-effective services. TWAV is an international team of blind, visually impaired, and sighted runners committed to race and raise funds for the cause.

Learn more about Team With A Vision.
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