

ACHILLES INTERNATIONAL

**2020
ANNUAL REPORT**

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Achilles family,

Thank you. As we embrace this new year, we do so with the acknowledgement that although 2020 took a toll on all of us, our community came together to embrace challenges; to encourage resilience and strength; and above all, to support one another. We could not have done it without you and I am incredibly grateful for every individual that makes up the Achilles community.

As we were ramping up our plans for 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic quickly pushed us to reinvent our approach to programming and connecting with each other. In true Achilles fashion, our community of athletes, volunteers, staff, supporters and friends rose to the occasion and embraced opportunities to connect, consider and appreciate our shared experiences in new and creative ways. From late night (or early morning) Chapter Zoom calls and virtual dance parties to digitally delivered workouts and team-based challenges, we have found meaningful ways to stay active, engaged and connected, even as we remain apart.

We did not let the absence of a shared starting line prevent us from supporting athletes in their training and nurturing our community's determination to achieve big goals. In this report you'll read about several highlights of the year including our Virtual Hope & Possibility race and the Achilles Cup. In addition to these successful virtual events that brought together thousands of athletes across the globe, Achilles was well represented in several marquee events that moved from the road to the web including the virtual marathons in Boston, New York City and Chicago, among others.

As we look ahead, we do so with confidence and resolve, knowing that our community is resilient and mighty. We will continue to come together to face challenges and confront obstacles, gaining strength from one another.

On behalf of the member athletes, volunteers and staff, thank you for your support and your friendship. Armed with both, Achilles enters this year equipped to continue reaching athletes and supporters all over the globe, and strengthening our message of Hope and Possibility for everyone.

Sincerely,

Emily Glasser
President and CEO

ACHILLES PROGRAMS

ACHILLES KIDS

Though COVID-19 presented challenges for Achilles Kids, within a week of the March shutdown, **the program pivoted to an entirely virtual program to help our members stay active, healthy, strong, and connected.** We developed a daily challenge program that included exercise videos, yoga, and a guide for all our members to follow at home. In addition, we moved all of our workouts online and added Friday Dance Parties, a resounding hit for all our members. For our weekend Team Achilles Kids program, we also created a “Virtual Buddy Program” - pairing kids with volunteer guides who work out together online every week.

The pandemic did not stop us from meeting our goal of participating in monthly races. We simply created fun and engaging virtual races, including a Superhero 5k, Royal Run 5k (with princesses, castles, and dragons!), and the first Annual Virtual Hope & Possibility® 5K & 10M in July. In September we slowly and safely resumed in-person workouts in Central Park. Currently, we meet once a month and while our numbers are smaller than pre-covid, for the children who can participate safely, we have helped our kids overcome the sense of isolation that has been so devastating for many.

September also ushered in a new school year. Since the majority of the children we serve learn remotely, in addition to creating new exercise videos each month, we have shifted our program to a monthly step/mile challenge. We provide customized goal charts and personalized certificates for each month's challenge.

As we look to the year ahead, Achilles Kids is excited to **work more closely with the NYC Department of Education to better integrate our program into their curriculum.** This partnership will have far-reaching benefits for all Achilles Kids here in NYC and throughout the U.S. during the pandemic and beyond.

ACHILLES CHAPTERS

INTERNATIONAL CHAPTERS

The onerous months of 2020 tested the Achilles International Chapters in ways we never could have imagined. But amidst the setbacks and hardships, we have seen and continue to see resilience and ingenuity from the Achilles Family around the world. **40 international chapters in 21 countries** continued Achilles' mission: transforming the lives of people with disabilities even in the face of a raging pandemic. International Chapters switched to virtual programs and, when possible, pursued in-person events. We even saw two new Chapters join us: Achilles Australia, Hunter Central Coast and Achilles Germany, Stuttgart.

More than **150 international members**, including guides, successfully crossed the **Virtual NYC Marathon finish line.** **Achilles Mongolia** inspired thousands with their live stream of the virtual NYC Marathon in Ulaanbaatar, which allowed athletes to complete the race in-person while observing social distancing protocols.

International Chapters actively participated in the Achilles Cup, **winning the first 3 places and, in total, taking 7 places out of the top 10 teams.** **With their wins,** Achilles Japan, Australia, Colombia, Mongolia, South Africa, Brazil and Canada, brought the worldwide Achilles family together as never before.

INTERNATIONAL CHAPTERS

On August 2, 2020, members from Achilles Russia were among the 100,000 participants on the starting line of the countrywide run “ZaBeg.RF” in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Vyborg, and Vologda. **Achilles Russia** ran in **28 races and held virtual competitions including darts, weights, and pushups.**

25 members of the **Achilles Colombia** Chapter participated in the **Colombian National Paracycling Championships** on December 1st, 2020 with the aid of their most active volunteers.

Weekend Achilles training sessions are the mainstay of Achilles Chapters, aiming to keep members active, healthy, and socially connected. **Achilles Australia and Achilles New Zealand’s** Sunday training has operated in a significantly different way from previous years due to new government health regulations. The Chapters **introduced processes designed to ensure the health and safety of their members**, including an RSVP system to pair members and guides ahead of time. Virtual events were also featured during the pandemic, with many Chapters offering online fitness classes for their members.

Achilles Brazil is the champion of online programming, having created a **manual on how to stay active at home, recording fitness videos for their members, and hosting 25 live webinars**. During these webinars, they interviewed members, gave insightful information on specific health conditions, and offered 3 virtual dance classes to support members’ mental wellbeing during isolation.

Achilles Ecuador, UK, Peru, Panama and Mexico members ran as much as they could in lockdown. Chapter members remained **engaged via Zoom, WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook and other social media networks**.

Our **Norway** Chapter board went above and beyond, **keeping their community engaged through special weekly letters that encouraged members to read new books, listen to relevant music, and think about and discuss hot topics and historical events**.

ACHILLES CHAPTERS

US CHAPTERS

The necessity of physical distance between Achilles members thwarted many training programs. Chapter leaders found that online meetings and virtual races were the magic that kept them together while remaining apart. Creativity, remote coaching and one-on-one practice sessions between athletes and volunteer guides allowed many athletes to continue to pursue their goals of completing marathons, albeit in their own neighborhood and not in a crowd. Regular online meetings deepened existing friendships and formed new ones at the same time. Indeed, the **Queens, NY Chapter held its first Annual Gala on Zoom** to announce new Executive Board members and celebrate its members’ accomplishments.

In 2020, Achilles welcomed two new Chapters, bringing the total to 28 in the United States. **Achilles Long Island and Achilles Kansas City** are lacing up and preparing for workouts in Spring of 2021.

To celebrate 75 years in business, **U-Haul sponsored three U.S. Chapters in The U-Haul Keep It Moving Challenge**. Starting with **Achilles Connecticut**, then moving to **Achilles New Jersey**, and reaching stride with **Achilles Nashville**, all three Chapters worked together and individually to produce virtual and in-person **Hope & Possibility® events with accompanying swag**. Medals, neck gaiters, and koozies were delivered to the front doors of those who took on the Challenge and participated in all three races. With a long-standing tradition of military service and support, U-Haul works with **Achilles**

Greater Phoenix to identify injured, ill and wounded military men and women in the area who might benefit from and enjoy Achilles membership.

With different gathering restrictions in each state, **Achilles Chapter leaders looked to HQ for guidelines and received protocols and online tools to leverage against the spread of the virus.** While the pandemic caused us to alter the way we do things, we successfully struck the balance between safely convening to pursue our training and following public health guidelines and restrictions.

FREEDOM TEAM

For over 15 years, the Achilles Freedom Team has delivered a successful national handcycle/running adaptive sports program for veterans who are wounded, ill, or injured. Having supported the rehabilitation and recovery of **more than 2,000 veterans** since its inception in 2004, **the Freedom Team sets up our nation's heroes for a lifetime of success, personal achievement, and optimal health and wellness.**

In 2020, Achilles hosted two in person Wellness Race Weekends, one in Orlando and the other in Los Angeles, for our Freedom Team athletes, caregivers, and children. We know how sacred those weekends together are, and we are grateful to have started 2020 with two of them.

With the cancellation of all in person events for the balance of the year, Achilles quickly began to re-imagine ways in which we serve the veterans with disabilities population, engaging them in enriching challenges to keep their bodies and minds focused, strong and race-ready. In addition to at-home workout plans and videos, Achilles provided virtual race experiences for the Boston Marathon, Marine Corps Marathon, DAV 5K, the Achilles Hope & Possibility 4 and 10 miler, and our premier team-mileage challenge – The Achilles Cup. The Freedom Team came in fifth place and racked up more than 8,937 miles.

Over the course of the year, in addition to physical activity and Achilles-wide virtual events, we **hosted more than 25 virtual hangouts for the Freedom Team** and offered a workshop in storytelling with experts from The Moth. These events provided opportunities for bonds to grow stronger and community to flourish. During this increased isolation, our team came together, supported each other, and found comfort and strength as a group.

By the end of 2020, the team was strong and connected in ways unlike before. We look forward to implementing more ways to enhance the lives of these heroes and know it will be epic when we gather for in-person wellness race weekends again in late 2021.

TRIACHILLES

2020 saw the most transformative year for TriAchilles. **When in-person workouts and events shut down, the program quickly pivoted to hold weekly virtual meetings,** providing fitness content and much needed social connection. As the year went on, and in-person activities resumed, TriAchilles instituted their first ever regular biweekly long rides starting in the summer and continuing through the fall months.

Without the pressure of racing, members could focus on basic bike skill development and longer rides. As we look ahead, newly developed training protocols and standards for athletes, guides, and volunteers will ensure a more cohesive and effective TriAchilles. Additionally, we will continue to embrace development of virtual training content having recognized that it has enabled us to reach a broader audience.

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

THE FIRST ANNUAL ACHILLES CUP

2020 saw the creation of the first ever Achilles Cup, a three week virtual fitness challenge that brought together Achilles athletes, guides and supporters from all over the globe. **Over 2,000 people** signed up to run, walk, wheel, swim and log indoor cardio minutes. The challenge included over 100 teams and 40 chapters worldwide, with over 20 corporate teams participating. In total, Achilles Cup participants covered 133,000 miles — equal to five trips around the Earth. **Over 119,000 minutes of cardio** were logged — an incredible **82 days of activity**. The winner was announced at the Toast to Achilles with Achilles Japan coming out on top, followed closely by Achilles Australia in second place and Achilles Colombia taking third. We look forward to the Achilles Cup's in 2021.

THE FIRST EVER ACHILLES VIRTUAL HOPE & POSSIBILITY® 5K / 10 MILER, PRESENTED BY TD BANK

On July 18th, nearly **3,000 individuals from 23 countries and 47 U.S. States** took on the challenge to run/walk/bike in the First Annual Achilles Virtual Hope & Possibility® 5K/10Miler Presented by TD Bank. The Achilles community came together worldwide to promote disability inclusion and awareness and celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The race kicked off with a panel discussion featuring professional runner **Mary Cain**. Mary was joined by Achilles runners and guides from around the U.S. who shared their favorite past Hope & Possibility moments, as well as goals for 2020. The event also featured a virtual start line ceremony with a list of high profile supporters, including Jon Stewart, Meghan McCain, Trisha Meili, and Senator Tammy Duckworth. Kirstin Cole, PIX11 reporter and Achilles Board Member, closed the event moderating a panel discussion titled: "The ADA at 30: A Turn to the Future." The panel included Congressman Tony Coelho and Governor David Paterson, among others.

TOAST TO ACHILLES, A NIGHT OF INSPIRATION AND CONVERSATION

On November 19th, Achilles held its first ever virtual benefit, A Toast to Achilles. During the event, we highlighted our quick pivot to virtual programming and events as the COVID-19 pandemic made in person gatherings impossible to host safely. Our amazing team and volunteers helped us to keep Achilles moving even while apart. We also announced the winners of the Achilles Cup!

The benefit was hosted by PIX11 reporter and Achilles Board member Kirstin Cole. Guests included **Jon Stewart, Tiki Barber, and Deborah Roberts**. The event featured interviews with Achilles athletes- **Master Sgt. Cedric King, Anthony Butler, and Team Achilles Kid member, Sheridan**. Achilles athletes, volunteers, and supporters worldwide tuned in to celebrate Achilles and our athletes.

This event wouldn't have been possible without the support of our generous sponsors and our text to pledge donors.

OUR IMPACT

8,116: Number of athletes served

11,851: Lives touched (athletes served and volunteers engaged)

492: Virtual hangouts hosted

16,000+: Number of Achilles virtual workout views

152,995: Number of miles run, walked, biked in Achilles Virtual Races

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

2020 EXPENSES

\$2,052,487 TOTAL

12.5% Fundraising

67.5% Programs

20% Administrative

2020 REVENUES

\$2,151,586 TOTAL

\$60,340 Government Grants

\$939,176 Individuals

\$255,474 Foundations

\$896,596 Corporations

DONOR ROLL

\$250,000+

Cigna

\$100,000 - \$249,999

TD Bank, N.A.

The Moody Endowment

\$50,000 - \$99,999

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