

CELEBRATING RESILIENCE

2021 Annual Report

ALT TEXT IN ITALICS FROM .PDF DESIGNED VERSION: Achilles' logo, decorative orange and purple circles, with a group photo in the center of Achilles athletes and guides cheering at the finish of the Resilience Relay

Collage of different Achilles moments from this year. Hugs, smiles, finish lines, group workouts, and more

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO

Dear Achilles Community,

The foundation of Achilles is our community. The high five, the fist bump, the crowds on race day, the sound of a “Go Achilles” from a stranger running or rolling by matter more than you can imagine.

We’re a team. Donning the neon yellow Achilles shirt connects us and gives us that sense of belonging. None of it is possible without you. If I had to pick one word to sum up 2021, it’s resilience. We navigated so many twists and turns together, from maintaining connection through lockdowns, celebrating the return to in-person workouts and races to pulling back once again with a year-end surge of the virus.

Though this has been another challenging year, it is one to celebrate. I want to take this moment to celebrate YOU.

You raced. You volunteered. You donated. You followed. You trained and smiled in the heat, the rain, the cold, the pandemic. If your event was canceled or travel was not possible, you went outside and just made your own. You learned how to steer a handcycle. You pushed someone else up the hill and made a new friend. When 26.2 miles felt too "easy," you took it up a notch further and tried a triathlon for the first time. You turned a computer screen into a virtual dance party.

I want to thank you for being on this journey with us and for never wavering in your commitment to the Achilles International community. I cherish your involvement with Achilles and look forward to being with you, in person and in spirit, at more start lines around the globe.

Sincerely,
Emily Glasser
President and CEO

**Images depict: Achilles President Emily double fist bumping an Achilles member at an event in Central Park; An Achilles runner and two guides at either side celebrate crossing the finish line with raised arms in Achilles shirts*

**Background Photo across both pages is of a runner in an Achilles shirt crossing through a finish line banner with people cheering in the background. Runner is wearing a red cap and glasses*

OUR IMPACT

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS TO THE START LINE FOR ATHLETES WITH DISABILITIES SINCE 1983

60% say the greatest benefit of Achilles to their lives has been a stronger sense of community or helping others

80% of Achilles members report an increase in their well-being and self-confidence

Orange background of a square info graphic highlighting key numbers from Achilles' impact.

The infographic, read left to right, reads:

- 500 Finish lines crossed
- 277 new athletes with disabilities
- 1,069 U.S.-based volunteers signed up
- 70 chapters worldwide
- 150,000 youth, adults and veterans served and counting

Large cutout image of Freedom Team Handcyclists fist bumping with fellow racer, spread across both pages with orange outline

THE COMEBACK

The pandemic kept us apart. The Achilles Resilience Relay brought us back together.

Athletes with disabilities and their guides completed the 650-mile relay running, riding and walking from Charlotte, NC, to New York, NY, from June 26 to July 10. The relay shed light on the 26% of Americans living with a disability. From sunrise to sunset, 130 athletes rallied their local communities raising over \$109,000. Longtime Achilles sponsor, General Motors, led the fundraising charge by engaging local Chevrolet dealers along the route.

After the athletes battled through the effects of the heat and Tropical Storm Elsa rainfall, they were greeted in New York City for the final segment of the route with a special Bloomingdale's window display, featuring videos of Achilles NYC teammates cheering them on to the finish. The journey ended with a final baton pass in Central Park at the start line of the 19th Annual Achilles Hope & Possibility® 4-Miler presented by TD Bank and hosted by New York Road Runners.

Nearly 4,000 runners completed the race in a sea of smiles, high-fives and hugs. Hope and Possibility embodies athletes of all abilities to come together in the running community and run for a great cause," said Achilles athlete Lamar Brown.

ACHILLES STRONG FROM START TO FINISH

Achilles athletes were awarded prizes and placed in the top three of their divisions at the Boston Marathon!

Congratulations:

- Zach Stinson, Freedom Team
- Wendy Larsen, Achilles Houston
- Adam Popp, Freedom Team
- Irwin Ramirez, Achilles DC

We're proud of our Achilles athletes who participated in the following major races in 2021:

Achilles Resilience Relay
June 26 - July 10
130 athletes and 170 guides

Achilles Hope & Possibility® Presented by TD Bank
July 10
75 athletes and 115 guides

NYC Triathlon
July 11
12 athletes and 12 guides

Berlin Marathon
September 26
24 athletes and 23 guides

Chicago Marathon
October 10
14 athletes and 20 guides

Boston Marathon
October 11
35 athletes and 9 guides

Detroit Marathon
October 17
19 athletes and 1 guide

50th TCS NYC Marathon
November 7
115 athletes and 90 guides

**Handcyclist smiling in his handcycle while wearing Achilles shirt
 Achilles Boston Members on the stoop of a home in Achilles gear with a small black dog
 Achilles athletes and guides crossing a finish line with a yellow balloon arch in the background*

CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS

Athletes with disabilities and volunteer guide runners team up each week for a workout at Achilles chapters all over the world. Our chapters also provide athletes a powerful sense of social connection.

U.S. CHAPTERS

Boston returned to group workouts while Utah created a 365-mile tandem bike ride capped off with a marathon.

Houston led a workout at the groundbreaking ceremony for the city's first fully accessible park.

Connecticut, Nashville, and New Jersey teamed up with U-Haul for the Keep It Moving Challenge, which included virtual and in-person Hope and Possibility® races of varying distances.

Kansas City and Long Island squared off in a virtual Strava challenge to motivate members to log miles in August.

The Newington High School Field hockey team raised funds and teamed up with Connecticut to learn about guide running.

Achilles Tucson President Lupita and Vice President Lisa took first place in their age groups in the Southern Arizona Roadrunners Grand Prix 12-race series.

Ain't No Mountain High Enough for Achilles

**Photo of Kelly on Mt. Everest Base Camp with Achilles shirt*
 Kelly Trujillo, Kansas City chapter leader, raised thousands when she dedicated her Mount Everest Base camp trek in Nepal to Achilles!

**Ecuador Soccer Team*

Achilles athletes and guides running and cycling down a road

Achilles Brazil

Dozens of athletes, some accompanied by children and pets, sitting and standing in a group and smiling

Female hand cyclist smiling at the camera

Group of athletes in wheelchairs showing off their medals

INTERNATIONAL CHAPTERS

Members around the world found ways to stay active despite the challenging circumstances of the pandemic. From social distanced runs in forests to beating the harsh cold and heat, Achilles athletes didn't let anything stop them from completing the coveted 26.2-mile marathon distance.

Map of the world with continents in orange and purple pins showing where Achilles Chapters are Ecuador not only added an ultra-marathon to their Hope & Possibility® themed races, they have their very own soccer team that competed in the national championships for amputees.

Colombia completed the Gran Fondo Ponal 90k cycling race.

Mongolia worked with the National Park in UlaanBaatar to build an accessible clubhouse that allows members to access locker rooms and store running wheelchairs and gear in harsh weather conditions.

"I have managed to fulfill my sports dream of running 100 kilometers. I like to lead by example and I managed to get three handcyclists to join me. I am proud of all the athletes for being the pioneers and benchmarks of my country and proud to be part of Achilles International in bringing hope and possibilities far beyond the limits of known distances." - Byron Pozo, Director of Achilles Ecuador

**Photo of Freedom Team athlete biting medal at NYC Marathon finish line
Photo of Jeff Lewis smiling, arm outstretched with Verrazano Bridge in background*

ACHILLES FREEDOM TEAM

The team, composed of veterans living with a disability, collectively crossed over 60 start lines! This would not have been possible without the enduring support of our Freedom Team sponsors, Cigna and General Motors. The fall marathon tour was like no other, with Berlin, Chicago, Boston, Detroit and New York stacked closer together than usual due to the pandemic.

Captained by former United States Marine Sgt. Mike Sprouse, the team completed 400-miles of the Resilience Relay. They were greeted by former President George W. Bush in Washington D.C. at a Cigna sponsored event.

A jubilant Achilles athlete spreads arms wide and smiles for the camera while sitting in his wheelchair with a bridge and sunset in the background Achilles Hand cyclist biting his medal in celebration at the end of a race

“After you’re injured, you are always looking to get your freedoms back. That’s one of the things you look towards. Being able to ride gives me that sense I had pre-injury.” - Jeff Lewis, 9-year U.S. Army veteran

Orange infographic with stats

- 100 active members
- 1,500 served

**Group photo of Team Achilles Kids at Abbott Dash to the Finish Line 5K.
Achilles Kid guides working out with their group in the park.
Achilles Kid finishes a race with supporters cheering behind her.
Group photo of Team Achilles Kids members and guides at a chapter meetup in
Central Park. President Emily is standing with the kids, and Phil Hansen is on the right
side of the photo*

ACHILLES KIDS

From the classroom and the computer to the parks, Achilles' programming helped youth of all ages stay active and feel connected. The kids had a busy season of new race PRs and virtual dance parties.

Professional endurance driver Phil Hanson surprised Team Achilles Kids in person to lead a warmup, run and Q&A. Being able to share a workout with Team Achilles is always a delight and I look forward to more great workouts together," says Hanson.

On July 15, we launched a new group in Prospect Park, Brooklyn thanks to the DICK'S Sporting Goods Foundation. We will be launching soon in Houston, TX. Achilles Kids continues to offer an incredible outlet for children with disabilities all over the world.

"As a teacher, I greatly enjoy the support and flexibility of the Achilles Kids program. Each of my athletes have unique abilities. Students enjoy this structured running program while increasing their endurance and stamina.

For students who changed teachers or schools, this program has been particularly beneficial by helping give them a sense of stability. My students are delighted when they receive their certificates as acknowledgement of their achievement." - Dan Feldman, San Diego Unified School District, Achilles Kids participant since 1999

Orange infographic with stats

- 99 active schools
- 4,341 kids across
- 13 states
- 23,744 virtual miles

Group photo in the pool at Triathlon Training camp

Athlete posing for a picture with his guides and a dog

Group photo of over a dozen athletes, guides, and a guide dog posing for the camera

Overhead photo of tandem bike riders on a road

TRIACHILLES

The triathlon training camp held in the fall teaches the skills needed to one day complete a tri, and it encourages athletes and their guides to try something new! Five Achilles athletes participated in multi-sport events for the first time ever including Irwin Ramirez, Washington DC chapter President.

Ramirez participated in the TD Five Boro Bike Tour in New York with more than 20 Achilles athletes. Three athletes represented Achilles at the Team USA talent development camp. We hope to see some of them representing Team USA internationally this coming season.

**Tiki Barber*

Mike Sprouse puts all hands in with his team of supporters

Three Athletes show off their gold medals

Hand cyclist in Achilles shirt smiling for the camera

CELEBRATION OF RESILIENCE

On November 18, 2021, we held our virtual Celebration of Resilience. We honored the athletes, volunteers and supporters in the Achilles community who embodied resilience: Ezequias Prado, Achilles Brazil; Nick Roker, Achilles NYC; Mike Sprouse, Achilles Freedom Team.

The evening, which raised over \$416,000, featured “The Guide,” special skit starring TV personalities from The Bachelor franchise, Dustin Blaine Kendrick, Dr. Joe Park and Peter Weber as well as Achilles staff Francesco, Michael and Janet. Kirstin Cole, PIX 11 reporter, hosted the evening, which also included special appearances by Achilles guide and former New York Giants running back Tiki Barber, and Achilles Board member Meghan McCain.

**Athlete with Team Achilles shirt with Devin written across the top running with arms spread*

Athlete with Team Achilles shirt with Antonio written across the top running with arms spread, thumbs up and huge smile

TEAM ACHILLES

Since the cancellation of races in 2020, our charity runners have helped to raise over half a million dollars!

Grant Palmer was named top fundraiser of our NYC Marathon team raising nearly \$16,000.

2021 Races

- NYC Marathon: 105 charity runners
- Chicago Marathon: 22 charity runners
- Berlin Marathon: 18 charity runners
- NYC Triathlon: 6 charity runners

Top Charity Entrant Fundraisers

- KAREN LEWIS
- GRANT PALMER
- STEPHEN POWER
- OLIVIA DILORATI
- MATT J. ROYKA
- ANDREA QUAREGNA
- WEIHUA JU
- ROB LAMBERT
- ALISA MCQUEEN
- DANIELLE PADOVANO
- JENNY HWANG
- ERIN MONDELLO

**Brianna and Jeffrey*

Dixon and his crew on the water in a white boat with three long paddles visible from the side of the boat

LOVE AT FIRST GUIDE

Brianna Nielsen and Jeffrey Gelband first met while volunteering as guides for our New York City chapter.

We congratulate them on their wedding in August and thank them for their generosity. In lieu of a registry, the couple asked their wedding guests to donate to Achilles, raising thousands to help us transform the lives of athletes living with a disability.

"There are very few things in my life that I have found more rewarding than becoming part of the Achilles community" - Jeff Gelband

CROSSING THE ATLANTIC FOR ACHILLES

Longtime Achilles super-guide Dixon McDonald showed his support in a unique way last year by rowing 3,000 miles across the Atlantic Ocean in support of Achilles. Dixon and his three teammates competed in the Talisker Whiskey Atlantic Challenge, which set off from La Gomera in the Canary Islands on December 12th, 2020.

They arrived in Antigua 36 days, 5 hours, 10 minutes later finishing in 2nd place in their division, 3rd place overall, and making Dixon the 55th American to row across the Atlantic. Dixon was able to raise an astonishing \$50,000+ to support Achilles athletes all over the world. Achilles athletes and guides never cease to amaze and inspire me so I feel lucky that I was able to support such a fantastic organization by taking on this trans-Atlantic ocean rowing challenge," says Dixon.

**Wendy receiving her award and smiling at the camera while holding it up
Eric and his guide in a selfie with Achilles shirts on Kim and two guides smiling at the camera
Achilles hand cyclist and supporters posing on a road in a park*

ATHLETE SPOTLIGHT

Wendy Larsen, Achilles Houston, placed first in the Women's Handcycle division of the Boston Marathon at 1:37:15.

"Most of my life I was told by doctors that I could not play sports, I could not run, I could not do anything that would put any kind of impacts on my joints and got told "no" a lot," Larsen told her local NBC affiliate. "I set a personal record, by quite a bit, came in first place and I set a course record for women's handcycle."

Eric Strong, Achilles Charlotte, completed 44 miles in one day to kick off the Resilience Relay.

"I was ecstatic to be part of something so great," says Strong.

In 2020, nurse and ultrarunner Kim McCoy was hit by a car while running a 340-mile endurance race and had to have her leg amputated. In 2021, after joining Achilles NYC, she completed the Hope & Possibility® 4M, her first race after the tragic accident.

"This is just the start of my journey," she told *Runner's World*.

THANK YOU TO OUR NEW PARTNERS IN ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION

**Image of two people standing in a park with a purple line on the ground, which is a part of the project guideline technology*

Team Jenny celebrating as two guides run alongside Jenny with their hands clasped

We are proud to partner with Google on Project Guideline, groundbreaking early-stage research that may one day help the blind and visually impaired run independently. Our athletes across the country are testing the technology and sharing valuable feedback with Google's research team.

We are also grateful for the support of the Citi Bike® team of our Adaptive Cycling Program in New York City. Together, we are advancing access to recreational cycling opportunities.

DONOR ROLL**\$250,000+**

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\$100,000-\$249,999

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- Paul, Weiss, Smart & Biggar LLP
- Winston & Strawn LLP

A bicyclist and hand cyclist riding together as the sun sets
Smiling runner with a hat and Achilles shirt
Blind Achilles runner and guides posing at the end of the California International marathon
CEO Emily posing with an Achilles athlete with arms raised at the end of the New York City Marathon
Athletes and guides posing with medals and marathon blankets, and bags with snacks after the TCS NYC Marathon
Achilles Athlete surrounded by several guides with arms raised and big smiles

FINANCIAL IMPACT

INCOME

Government Grants
 \$70,853.00

Charity Bib Program
 \$377,087.59

Individuals
 \$1,281,077.15

Corporations
 \$1,055,304.49

Foundations
 \$270,763.15

EXPENSES

Programs
 65.30%

Fundraising
 14.43%

Admin
 20.27%

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ACHILLES INTERNATIONAL STAFF

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Janet Patton, Director, Achilles Freedom Team

Ryan Quick, Vice President, Development & Communications

Dominic Romano, Equipment Manager

Gerle Shagdar, Director, International Chapters

Gayathri Thelekatt, Coordinator, Development & Communications

Thank You in capital letters with images of Achilles runners inset into the letters

www.achillesinternational.org

315 West 39th Street, Suite 205

New York, NY 10018

info@achillesinternational.org

(212) 354-0300