

CONFIDENT LIVING WITH VISION LOSS

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For Immediate Release

Press Release Contact: Joe Benincasa, 800-761-3944, jbenincasa@romanelli.com

Media Contact for MABVI: Paul Twitchell, Director of Communications and Marketing, Massachusetts Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired, (617) 732-0264, ptwitchell@mabcommunity.org

Team With A Vision Runners Take On Boston Marathon

BROOKLINE, MA – Every runner who takes on the legendary Boston Marathon course faces a challenge, but few more than the members of [Team With A Vision \(TWAV\)](#), a group of blind and visually impaired runners (and their sighted guides) with a common cause: to raise funds and awareness for the visually impaired. The team, fielded by the Massachusetts Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (MABVI), draws runners from around the world, the nation, and the region to show that with the right support, people who are visually impaired can do anything they set their minds to. This year's team includes a number of notable competitors.

Mike Castle has run the Boston Marathon 12 times, won the Visually Impaired Division 5 times, and was on the original *Team With A Vision*. The last time Mike ran Boston with the team in 2004, he had just moved to France after growing up in Detroit and living many years in Ann Arbor. After a long hiatus and moving abroad, Mike decided to return in 2015 to defend his title and relive the Boston Marathon excitement. Castle lives in France with his wife and two children.

Michaela Flaherty, a Massachusetts native making her first appearance in the Boston Marathon, is a recent graduate of Assumption College, having ran on their Cross Country team. Her most recent accomplishments at Assumption in 2018 Outdoor Track included a 20th place at the NE10 Championships (5/4) in the 10,000m, and a 9th place finish at the 10,000m at the Yellow Jacket Invitational (4/7). Her favorite athlete is David Ortiz, and her dream is to run the Boston Marathon and one day go to the Paralympics. She was featured as Reebok's Boston For Women 10K.

Dan Berlin lost his sight in his 30s to cone rod dystrophy. Though he wasn't much of an athlete before losing his vision, the 46-year-old has taken on a slew of endurance challenges in the years since. Climbing Mount Kilimanjaro was just one of the expeditions he and friends Qualter Berna and Charles Scott, both of New York, and Brad Graff of Portland, Ore., have completed as Team See Possibilities, a charity they've set up around their adventures.

"Our mission is to help children who are blind all over the world," Berlin said. "And it's really to do things that break the perception of limitation—to put it out there to say, all of us can do more than we think we can do."

In 2018 Berlin and friend Jack Chen took on the Race Across America with their newly formed Team Sea to See. They made history as the first all-blind/visually impaired cyclist tandem team to take on the RAAM. Dan will be returning to the Boston Marathon for his 6th time toeing the line in Hopkinton, and will be traveling with his daughter Talia, who regularly volunteers with the team.

Kyle Robidoux, declared legally blind due to retinitis pigmentosa at the age of 19, is an avid runner and alpine skier. He has completed more than 40 road and trail races, from 5Ks to four 100-mile trail ultras, including the past five Boston Marathons. Last summer Kyle completed the grueling 6-day, 120-mile TransRockies Run through the Colorado Rockies, and this June he will be the first runner who is visually impaired to run the prestigious Western States Endurance 100-mile run. Kyle currently works for MABVI, where he manages United in Stride, a website that helps match sighted guides with runners who are blind/visually impaired. Kyle is an appointed member of the City of Boston's Commission for Persons with Disabilities, a mentor with the Partnership for Youth with Disabilities, and member of FriendshipWorks and Orchard Gardens Pilot School Board of Directors. Kyle is an Ambassador with Topo Athletic and Nathan Sports, and lives in the Lower Roxbury neighborhood of Boston with his wife and daughter.

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Jason Savageau is a 2012 graduate of Suffolk University Law School, and nearly 5 years of high-volume litigation experience in the legal services sector. Prior to law school, Jason worked on local and national political campaigns across the country. He also serves on the boards of the Perkins Business Partnership (PBP) and the Disability Policy Consortium, as well as being a Big Brother with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Massachusetts Bay. This will be Jason's first Boston Marathon.

"Our runners redefine what disability means," said Barbara Salisbury, CEO of the Massachusetts Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (MABVI). "They know that people who are visually impaired can do anything they set their minds to, and are inspiring others to understand that wisdom as well."

United In Stride

In 2015, MABVI also developed and founded United in Stride (UnitedInStride.com), a tool to unite runners who are blind or visually impaired with sighted guides across North America. The resource, inspired by Kyle Robidoux, answered the challenge many runners faced of finding sighted guides close to home, or when traveling to another part of the country for vacation or a race. The robust, interactive sighted guide database is helping to create more opportunities for visually impaired runners.

MABVI has fielded *Team With A Vision* for the Boston Marathon for 25 consecutive years. 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

Massachusetts Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Founded in 1903, Massachusetts Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (MABVI) is the oldest social service organization in the country supporting individuals who are blind or visually impaired. A division of MAB Community Services, Inc., MABVI is a leading provider of integrated medical, social, and rehabilitation services for adults and seniors with vision loss, ensuring they can continue to live full and satisfying lives. MABVI partners with numerous medical, senior services, and community agencies to create high-impact, cost-effective services.

Team With A Vision

For 25 years, Team With A Vision has featured many world-class athletes, both visually impaired and sighted, who participate to raise funds and awareness for MABVI. The team is a member of the 2019 John Hancock Marathon Program. While some visually impaired runners have enough sight to run on their own, most have guides who run with them, often on short tethers, advising them of turns, potholes, potential collisions, and other hazards. These running pairs often form long friendships, bonding through their shared challenges.

To learn more about *Team With A Vision*, visit mabvi.org/teamwithavision.

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