

Running For A Cause

By Resident **Amey Skladony**

The registration process, the crowds, the expensive wind-breakers, the iconic medals, 26.2 miles weaving through eight cities and towns ... the holy grail for every distance runner, The Boston Marathon. This April 15, 2019, is far more than just a Monday in April; this is a world-class running event for every runner in the world.

To get to the start line of this race is far more complex than one might realize. There are two main groups of runners who participate in the Boston Marathon. The first group of runners is the qualifiers, also known as the speedy group. These runners have finished a marathon in which they accomplished a qualifying time based on their age and gender. The time requirement is tough and gets tighter every year. (Google search to find your qualifying time). Now, just because you ran like a speed demon does not mean you will be accepted into the Boston Marathon. The Boston Athletic Association, the organizers of the Boston Marathon, received a total of 30,458 applications, with a total of 23,074 qualified applicants accepted.

The second group of runners is the charity runners. The BAA provides bibs to 260 nonprofits each year for charity runners. The nonprofits are allotted a certain number of bibs, and it is up to each nonprofit to select the runners and the amount of funds they will be responsible to raise before the big day. In 2018, charity runners raised a record \$36.6 million dollars.

This year I tossed in an application to represent Camp Kita. Camp Kita is a bereavement summer camp in Maine for kids who have lost loved ones to suicide. The mission of Camp Kita is deeply personal to me, and my heart was already saying, "lace them up"! After ten years of being a volunteer at the marathon, I finally went about filling out a lengthy application sharing why I was interested in running for Camp Kita. After a few months, I received the email I had impatiently been waiting for: I was one of four runners selected to run the 2019 Boston Marathon on behalf of Camp Kita!

Now is when the fun began. Training in the middle of the winter means getting creative. Winter runners are the group you see on North River Road with our headlamps and flashing vests, the people to whom you say "look at those crazy people, what are they wearing? Go home!" We might look angry as we wait for the light on Union Street to change, but we have a million things on our minds, like that ice or slush up ahead. Can I pass that house with the barking dog without changing sides of the road? And my personal favorite thing to think about while running: what am



I going to eat when this run is over? While the winter training definitely poses its challenges, the fundraising is a big element of my decision to run Boston. I have a fundraising goal of \$10,000. The Boston Marathon is the biggest source of funds for Camp Kita and the main reason they can stay tuition-free for all kids attending. That is a lot of pressure and something I won't allow myself to fail at.

To reach my \$10,000 fundraising goal, I have called on the local community to attend events in the area, such as a calligraphy night at The Bookery, a board game event at Great North Aleworks, a workout session at Orangetheory Manchester, and a dining event at Shorty's. Every conversation I have had since accepting my fundraising role has been focused on supporting Camp Kita. They say runners are a different breed. We become deeply passionate and focused, and fundraising is another element where that proves true. If you would like to learn more about my adventures to the start line or learn more about Camp Kita, please visit www.ameyskladony.com.

Amey Skladony has lived in the North End since 2016 with her husband Mike and her two rescue dogs Louise and Finnigan. She is a marketing professional who spends her free time collecting and selling antiques or training for road races. www.ameyskladony.com @ameygrella

Sources: <https://www.baa.org/races/boston-marathon/enter/qualify>
<https://www.baa.org/2019-boston-marathon-qualifier-acceptances>
<https://www.baa.org/boston-marathon-fundraising-raises-36-million-2018-race>