



NEWS RELEASE

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Wisconsin's myTeam Triumph to debut in La Crosse at the July 4th Firecracker 4 Mile

LA CROSSE, WI – This year's 5th Annual Firecracker 4 Mile run/walk will be a first for myTeam Triumph, a non-profit organization that allows those with disabilities to participate in solo athletic competitions. Since its inception in 2010, the Wisconsin chapter of myTeam Triumph has established itself in cities like Milwaukee, Racine, Kenosha, Wausau, Eau Claire, and now--La Crosse.

At events, the myTeam Triumph "captains" sit in specialized racing wheelchairs. A small group "angels" take turns pushing the "captained" wheelchair. At the finish line, the entire cohort experiences the triumph of knowing that teamwork has made the seemingly impossible become a reality: The captain has finished a race!



As part of myTeamTriumph, Captain Emma is walking the final stretch of the 2018 Door County half marathon with her two angels. Through myTeam Triumph, those who are disabled, like Emma, can participate in solo athletic events and triumph with the help of angels who propel them along the race course.

Karla Sturycz, the director of operations for Wisconsin's myTeam Triumph, says that the nonprofit is "excited to experience La Crosse and its unique character on race day." She added, "When myTeam Triumph enters an event, we are also entering into a relationship with that community. With the Firecracker 4 Mile, we are on a mission to eliminate the social isolation felt by those with disabilities in the Coulee Region. And, we use endurance athletics to do just that – to reinforce that disability does not mean inability."

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Everyone has the ability to get involved in the family-friendly Firecracker 4 Mile at La Crosse’s Riverside Park on Thursday, July 4. Those running or walking the 4-mile Firecracker at 7 AM or participating in the kids’ races at 8:30 AM will be benefiting two highly-regarded nonprofit organizations: the Children’s Museum of La Crosse and the La Crosse Area Autism Foundation. In the past four years, with support from the J.F. Brennan Company and other sponsors, \$50,000 has been raised.



Youth “give it their all” in the 2018 Firecracker 4 Mile kids’ races. Proceeds from the adult and kids’ races benefit youth through the Children’s Museum of La Crosse and the La Crosse Area Autism Foundation.

Registration fees for the 4 mile are currently \$20 for an individual and \$60 for a family of three or more. Youth who register before the end of May can run the kids’ races for free. To register, volunteer, sponsor, and/or to learn more about the event, go to firecracker4mile.com.

Those interested in being a captain or angel must register at myteamt Triumph-wi.org, not at firecracker4mile.com. MyTeam Triumph offers a wide variety of racing equipment to accommodate the needs of captains. And, angels do not need to be super athletes. All are welcome to participate.



The 2018 Bellin Run 10K in Green Bay started with 42 captained race chairs and lots of running angels. This was myTeam Triumph of Wisconsin’s largest event to date. MyTeam Triumph will come to La Crosse for the first time on July 4 for the Firecracker 4 Mile.

Since its inception, the Firecracker 4 Mile has attracted about 600 participants each year and has changed its course three times. The current four-mile course, from Riverside Park to Pettibone Park via the Cass Street Bridge and then back to Riverside, is well-liked by participants and gives spectators ample opportunity to cheer for individuals and myTeam Triumph cohorts.

Runners and walkers who have experienced myTeam Triumph at other races know that the cohorts can get “wide” at the start line as well as at certain points on the course. But, Sturycz explained, “People ‘get’ what is going on. Time and again, race participants will step aside to let a cohort through or will help the angels on a seemingly impossible hill.” Whether watching or participating in a race with myTeam Triumph, the one-of-a-kind experience is uplifting – a reminder that there is “good” in the world.

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