



Run a Myelin My Shoes

By [Run a Myelin My Shoes](#)

Dec 27, 2018

15 Comments

We are “Run a Myelin My Shoes” (RAMMS), a team of 96 people from 25 U.S. states and 16 nations. 49 of us live with multiple sclerosis (MS); 47 are our support heroes. On October 21, 2018 we came together from every continent across the globe to participate in the Detroit Marathon. This is our story.

“If you had one shot
Or one opportunity
To seize everything you ever wanted
In one moment
Would you capture it?
Or just let it slip?”

These words of Detroit-native Eminem’s song “Lose Yourself” reverberated in a narrow, building-lined inner-city street. The sun had not yet risen. Many of Team RAMMS were in starting corrals. Despite the cold and the dark, anticipation filled the air. Detroit Marathon 2018 was about to begin.

RAMMS teammate Heather had sent us a message the day before: “Take me in your heart and fly!! Show the world MS will never ever steal our dreams!!” Heather had planned to be with us that morning, standing in this street preparing to start. But significant MS issues had prevented her from traveling. MS had taken Heather’s one shot to be here. It was not taking ours.

A year previously, Cheryl Hile had accomplished her quest to become the first person with MS to complete a marathon on every continent in the space of 12 calendar months (“7 on 7 in 12”). She did this wearing an Ankle Foot Orthotic (AFO) to compensate for foot drop. As a new goal, Cheryl developed the idea of bringing together people she had met during “7 on 7 in 12” to run an inner-city marathon. Detroit was selected. Within hours of announcing her intention, 11 committed to join. Participation then snowballed through a network of friends and friends of friends.

As the team grew, Cheryl’s AFO designer Hangar Clinic committed to provide team shirts. The National MS Society (NMSS) offered to sponsor a pre-race dinner and provide a team tent. The team doubled when a member suggested allowing virtual participants. Given the virtual option, Hangar Clinic encouraged registering participants from every continent to mirror Cheryl’s “7 on 7 in 12”. This was attained through personal contacts and connections established with MS societies on each continent. The Detroit Marathon agreed to send finishing medals to many of the virtual participants in return for donations to the Society.

As we counted down the days, an email list and a private Facebook group hummed daily with excitement and news. A presentation describing each participant was assembled. Then a year after this all started, we began.

55 RAMMS teammates started the half or full marathon or were spread throughout Detroit at relay handover points. On every continent, 41 virtual team members already had or would soon start their own journey with us.

In Detroit, running with 25,000 others, the orange “Run a Myelin My Shoes” team shirts allowed us to identify and encourage RAMMS teammates. We crossed the long Ambassador Bridge at sunrise, truck drivers loudly sounding their air horns in support.

We were not running to achieve a fast time or a personal best. We were running to achieve a victory for each of us individually and a collective victory for the MS community. Many months of preparation and multiple hours of racing were summed up in one last emotional gasp upon crossing the finish line. The RAMMS team crossed individual finish lines that day, but we represented an entire global community living with the same devastating illness. We showed the world that anything is possible. We established a new record—the largest number of people living with MS participating in a marathon event.

And Heather was able to join us after all. As a virtual participant, she strapped on two braces and pushed her poles 2.92 miles. She captured it, did not let it slip. In the words of RAMMS teammate Nora, “not today, MS.”

Do you want to be a part of our story next year? In 2019 we will participate in “America’s Friendliest Marathon” in Richmond, VA on Sunday, November 16. The Richmond Marathon offers 8K, half marathon and full marathon options. The 8K has no time limit – you can take as long as you need, utilize an assistive device or walk, and sit down to rest whenever needed. We will have people to accompany you. Or participate virtually in whatever form you are capable of from wherever you are in the world. Our goal in 2019 is to have our team number 200 people across 30 nations, every continent and every U.S. state. We would love to have you join us virtually or in-person.

To register your interest, please send an email to runamyelinmyshoes@gmail.com. As a thank you to our virtual teammates, below is a list of what each of them did in lieu of being in Detroit.

Thanks to our virtual participants:

Carolyn walked a mile in New York wearing her AFO; Rosemarie swam 25 minutes in New Jersey; Fernando ran 21KM with friends in Buenos Aires; Katie walked 21K in Seattle with Rhubarb her service dog; Stephanie ran the Fit Foodie 5K in San Diego; Amo ran 5K followed by a Cross-Fit workout in Oregon; Claudia swam 4K in shark infested waters in South Africa; Marnie ran a marathon in California over 5 days; Katie ran through a corn maze in Montana with her children; Jade and her mom walked 5K on Table Mountain in Cape Town; Heather and Bethany ran the Honolulu Marathon; Anita walked next to a river in Singapore then the next day walked in Mumbai; Katherine & Francois ran a 5K in Washington state; Eugenia ran 5K in Milan; Wouter ran 20K in Belgium; Rachel ran around a resort in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico; Heather ran a half marathon around a neighborhood track in Texas; Cherie ran a 10K in New Zealand; Lucy did a 3K open water swim in the Lake District, England; Kym did the Jervis Bay half marathon in Australia; Carlyn did part of the Denver Rock N' Roll Half Marathon; Chris ran the Amsterdam Marathon; Susan swam 10k in Lake Cowichan, British Columbia; Pam rode 30 miles on her bike in Kentucky; Ellie ran the Louis Archer 5K; Yumi, Takashi, Fuzuki and George walked around Tokyo; Daniel did a sprint triathlon in Buenos Aires; Kristin ran 10K outside at McMurdo Station, Antarctica;

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