

August 11, 2026

Largest Bank of America Chicago Marathon Field Yet Fueled by Inspiring Stories

The 2026 Event Will Welcome More than 55,000 Participants

CHICAGO, IL – The Bank of America Chicago Marathon returns on Sunday, October 11, for the 48th running of one of the world's most iconic road races.

Since 1977, the Bank of America Chicago Marathon has brought together runners from around the world to pursue ambitious goals, celebrate personal milestones and discover what's possible. More than 55,000 participants will take to the streets of Chicago, each with a story that reflects the determination, resilience and spirit of the running community. From the [world's top professional athletes chasing victory](#) to first-time marathoners, charity runners and inspiring individuals overcoming extraordinary challenges, every runner has a reason for taking the 26.2-mile journey. Below are some of the remarkable stories that will shape the 2026 Bank of America Chicago Marathon.

Media interested in covering the 2026 Bank of America Chicago Marathon can apply for media credentials now through Thursday, September 3. Visit the Chicago Marathon website for more information on the [media credential application](#).

Stories from the Field

- **Anthony Rizzo:** After being diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma at age 18, Anthony Rizzo experienced firsthand the challenges that cancer places on patients and their families. Following successful treatment and a return to baseball that ultimately led to a World Series championship, he founded the Anthony Rizzo Family Foundation to support pediatric cancer patients and their loved ones. Drawing from his own journey, Rizzo is committed to easing the financial and emotional burdens families face during treatment through direct support and community programs. For Rizzo, the foundation's mission is deeply personal: helping families navigate one of life's toughest challenges and ensuring no one has to face it alone. Rizzo will be joined by fellow 2016 teammate Jake Arrieta.
- **Alumni Runners, Randy Burt and Henry Kozlowski:** From the first Chicago Marathon on September 25, 1977, to the upcoming 48th, two runners have been on every start line and every finish line. Randy, 78 from Antioch, IL and Henry, 76 from Wilmette, IL have completed every Chicago Marathon. While they take it one year at a time, they are eyeing the 50th as their biggest milestone.
- **Bank of America Chicago Distance Series ambassadors:** The fourth edition of the Bank of America Chicago Distance Series culminates at the Bank of America Chicago Marathon. Local Distance Series participants and ambassadors [Chris Costoso](#), [Frank](#)

[Griggs](#), [Katie Huhe](#), [Sarah Lyons](#), [Maria Santos](#), [Genelyn Swanson](#) and [Eddie Ulin](#) will be celebrating the achievement on race day along with more than 4,000 runners.

- **Giles Ashton-Roberts, Norfolk, England:** Most people celebrate turning 50 with a bit of cake and bubbles. Giles Ashton-Roberts chose a different approach, running seven marathons across four continents to support the Motor Neurone Disease Association. He runs because his mother cannot. After nearly a decade living with MND (ALS or Lou Gehrig's Disease), much of what once felt ordinary for Giles' mother, including movement and speech, has become increasingly difficult. Running became his way of responding – not to fix it, but to take action. Despite injuries and setbacks, he keeps going with a clear purpose. The Bank of America Chicago Marathon will be the fifth marathon Giles runs in 2026 to raise funds for the MND Association.
- **Joabe Barbosa, Chicago, IL:** After becoming the first person known to run every street in Chicago, covering more than 4,000 miles across all 77 community areas, Joabe Barbosa is taking on his next milestone at the 2026 Bank of America Chicago Marathon. Running with charity partner My Block, My Hood, My City, a South and West Side Chicago-based nonprofit that empowers Chicagoans to invest in and strengthen their communities, Barbosa has spent the past year bringing that mission to life while celebrating the city's diverse neighborhoods and the stories of the people who call them home. By completing the Chicago Marathon, he will also become a 2026 Bank of America Chicago Distance Series finisher after crossing the finish lines of the Shamrock Shuffle and Chicago 13.1 earlier this year.
- **Thom Bateman, Wilmette, IL:** After retiring from the Air Force following 26 years of service, Thom will run his 100th marathon at this year's Bank of America Chicago Marathon, a milestone made even more meaningful because he considers Chicago home. During his military career, he lived across the country, but the Chicago Marathon has always been his home course. What began 20 years ago as a lifestyle change became a lifelong passion fueled by one simple goal: to be healthy enough to watch his children grow up. Now, as he reaches his 100th marathon in the city he loves, Thom's story is one of perseverance, purpose and the life-changing power of putting one foot in front of the other.
- **Esfandiar Beikmohammadi, Los Angeles, CA:** After a serious accident left him questioning whether he'd ever move normally again, Esfandiar transformed his recovery into a powerful journey of purpose. Every mile of the Bank of America Chicago Marathon represents a full-circle moment: from a hospital bed filled with uncertainty to the start line of one of the world's great races. For Esfandiar, Chicago isn't just a goal, it's proof that adversity can be turned into strength.
- **Ayo Baruwa, London, England:** When his partner was diagnosed with cancer during lockdown, Ayo witnessed strength and resilience in their purest form. After losing her in 2022, he found himself physically unhealthy and struggling to find direction, until running gave him structure, clarity, and a way to carry her memory forward. Now channeling grief into purpose, Ayo is running the Abbott World Marathon Majors in her honor, with Chicago representing another powerful chapter in that journey. Inspired by the city's own spirit of resilience and its deep connection to the blues, turning struggle into expression, he runs every mile with gratitude and with his partner in his heart.

- **Guy Conners, Chicago, IL:** Since October 2023, the Bank of America Chicago Distance Series has reserved bib #321 at each event for a neurodivergent athlete as part of the Runner 321 Movement. In 2026, Guy Conners will wear bib #321 at the Bank of America Chicago Marathon, representing people with disabilities after also running the Bank of America Chicago 13.1 earlier this year. Diagnosed with autism as a child, Guy discovered a passion for running in adulthood, completing his first marathon in 2013. Running has become a family tradition, with Guy sharing countless miles alongside his parents over the years. A longtime Chicago Marathon participant and ultramarathoner, Guy hopes to inspire others by showing what's possible through perseverance and the support of his community.
- **Timothy Gross, Northfield, IL:** In 1977, this Chicago-born runner ran the very first Chicago Mayor Daley Marathon at age 20. He stepped away from running before returning in 2016, transforming himself from 247 pounds and sedentary to the marathon start line. Since then, he has completed more than 500 races. Now nearly 70 and deaf, Timothy has systematically lowered his marathon time, running a 3:40:35 in 2024 and targeting a new personal best this fall for his 10th Chicago finish. His story spans half a century of Bank of America Chicago Marathon history, a family company with 107 years of roots in the city, and a wife who cheers him on from the sidelines.
- **Brenda Hann, Los Angeles, CA:** Born and raised on Chicago's South Side, Brenda is a healthcare executive and clinical research professional who's returning to run through the streets that shaped her, just eight days before her 62nd birthday, a gift she's giving herself. A member of the LA Leggers running community, Brenda credits the sport with transforming her daily philosophy and keeping her osteoporosis stable, with her doctors encouraging her to keep going rather than slow down. Her story is a powerful message to every woman over 50 who has been told to limit herself: lace up, show up, and keep moving forward. Running Chicago means coming home.
- **Matthew Haas, North Saint Paul, MN:** After years of complications from a tumor he was born with in his foot, Matthew made the decision to have his leg amputated in January 2019. Since then, he has transformed his life through running. His prosthetist introduced him to the Challenged Athletes Foundation, which provided his first running blade, and what followed was a 60-pound weight loss, dramatically improved mental health, and an unstoppable drive to take on longer distances. Chicago will be his fourth marathon, and he's running in support of the Children's Tumor Foundation, the charity dedicated to neurofibromatosis, the condition that caused his tumor in the first place.
- **Mykensie Halily, Coraopolis, PA:** This nurse and para-athlete has faced a lifetime of health challenges with extraordinary grace: Hodgkin's lymphoma treatment at 21, a multiple sclerosis diagnosis discovered three days before her wedding in 2017, and the devastating loss of two pregnancies in the past year. Mykensie signs up for marathons not in spite of her health struggles but because of them: each race has been an act of healing, a way to honor life's fragility while celebrating its endurance. Running Chicago as a para-athlete alongside her sister, she will line up with a heart that is simultaneously broken and full and she will move forward, because moving forward is what she does.

- **Leodhais Macpherson, British Columbia, Canada:** Leodhais turned to running to honor the memory of his late brother, Conor, whose dream was to live in New York City. In 2025, Macpherson completed an extraordinary challenge of running 128 marathons in 128 consecutive days, covering more than 3,300 miles and raising awareness for mental health. His inspiring journey earned him the Abbott World Marathon Majors World Tour prize, providing entry into every Abbott World Marathon Major. Now, Macpherson has set his sights on completing all the majors over the next two years, with the 2026 Bank of America Chicago Marathon serving as a key stop on his global mission.
- **Angela Mills, Chicago, IL:** With 17 Bank of America Chicago Marathons and more than 27 total marathons to her name, Angela has made Chicago a cornerstone of her identity and this year, runs with even deeper purpose, honoring her mother and baby brother whose lives were lost in a tragic house fire. Running has transformed Angela mentally and emotionally, building the discipline and consistency she now brings to every aspect of life. A proud member of Black Chicago Runners, she runs not only for personal achievement but to inspire others to stay consistent and keep going, no matter where they start. She is, as she puts it simply, not done yet.
- **Jacob Nur, Elk Grove, CA:** At 70 years old, Jacob Nur continues to redefine what's possible in distance running. A multiple American and world age-group record holder, Nur is targeting the 2026 Bank of America Chicago Marathon as an opportunity to break the world marathon record for runners aged 70–74 after a hamstring injury forced him to withdraw from the 2025 race. A two-time USATF Masters Runner of the Year and former USATF Athlete of the Week, he enters the year as the holder of several American and world records, including age-group marks in the half marathon, 10 miles and 10K. Nur's accomplishments include age-group victories at the 2021 London Marathon, 2022 Boston Marathon and 2023 Berlin Marathon. With the flat, fast streets of Chicago as his stage, he hopes to showcase that elite, record-breaking performances are possible at any age while inspiring runners around the world to continue pursuing ambitious goals.
- **Brittany Parish, Osage Beach, MO:** Brittany is running the Bank of America Chicago Marathon for a cause deeply personal to her: raising awareness for veteran suicide prevention, a mission born from witnessing firsthand the silent struggles many carry long after the uniform comes off. Running has become her way of processing, healing, and honoring those who are no longer here. She first found community in racing at a local Bridge and Dam event, where she ran her first 5K and half marathon, and knew she wanted to be part of something even bigger. Chicago, where she spent two years living and training for the Navy, is a city she calls her home away from home.
- **Chris Reyes, Manor, TX:** Chris Reyes is running the 2026 Bank of America Chicago Marathon for the Alzheimer's Association in honor of his mother, whose strength and support have shaped his life. Diagnosed with Alzheimer's 10 years ago and recently recovering from a stroke, she inspired Chris through his own challenges growing up with Stargardt's disease, a visual impairment that limits his eyesight. As he takes on a larger caregiving role, Chris is dedicating each mile of his marathon journey to the woman who has stood by him every step of the way.

- **Audrey Simons, New York, NY:** In 2023, after completing her first half marathon in Ann Arbor, Audrey suffered compartment syndrome so severe it rendered her unable to walk, requiring a bilateral fasciotomy with unfavorable odds for full recovery. Three years of complications, setbacks, and determined rehabilitation followed. Now, just before her 26th birthday, she will run 26.2 miles through Chicago, a number she describes as more than coincidence, a fitting tribute to a journey built entirely on grit, gratitude, and the refusal to give up on a sport she loves. Her motivation is simple and profound: she is grateful every single day for the doctors, surgeons, and physical therapists who made this moment possible.
- **Lee Warn, Auckland, New Zealand:** This New Zealand wheelchair racer's story is as joyful as it is extraordinary: Lee is on track to become the first wheelchair user from New Zealand to complete the Abbott World Marathon Majors Six Star journey and he's doing it wearing a squirrel costume. Introduced to racing after breaking his back, he credits sport with helping him get off drugs and transform his mental health. Now running Chicago as his third star in the World Marathon Majors series, every mile he races is an invitation to others: that running is for everyone, regardless of ability, and that fun and inclusion are the most powerful messages of all. People always ask why the costume, the answer is simple: it makes people smile.

For more information on this year's race, visit chicagomarathon.com.

About the Bank of America Chicago Marathon

In its 48th year on Sunday, October 11, 2026, the Bank of America Chicago Marathon will welcome thousands of participants from more than 100 countries and all 50 states, including a world-class professional athlete field, top regional and Masters runners, race veterans, debut marathoners and charity participants. The race's iconic course takes participants through 29 vibrant neighborhoods on an architectural and cultural tour of Chicago. Annually, more than a million spectators line the streets cheering on tens of thousands of participants from the start line to the final stretch down Columbus Drive. As a result of the race's national and international draw, the Chicago Marathon assists in raising millions of dollars for a variety of charitable causes while generating over \$756 million in annual economic impact to its host city. The 2026 Bank of America Chicago Marathon, a member of the Abbott World Marathon Majors, will start and finish in Grant Park beginning at 7:30 a.m. on Sunday, October 11. In advance of the race, a three-day Abbott Health & Fitness Expo will be held at McCormick Place Convention Center on Thursday, October 8, Friday, October 9, and Saturday, October 10. For more information about the event and how to get involved, go to chicagomarathon.com.

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