

2024 Heroes Participant's Guide



BANK OF AMERICA
Chicago
Marathon.





Table of Contents

Welcome	2
Where to Start	3
Team Jerseys	4
Fundraising	5
Training	7
Mark Your Calendar!	8
Additional Opportunities	9
Additional Questions?	10



Hello Hero!

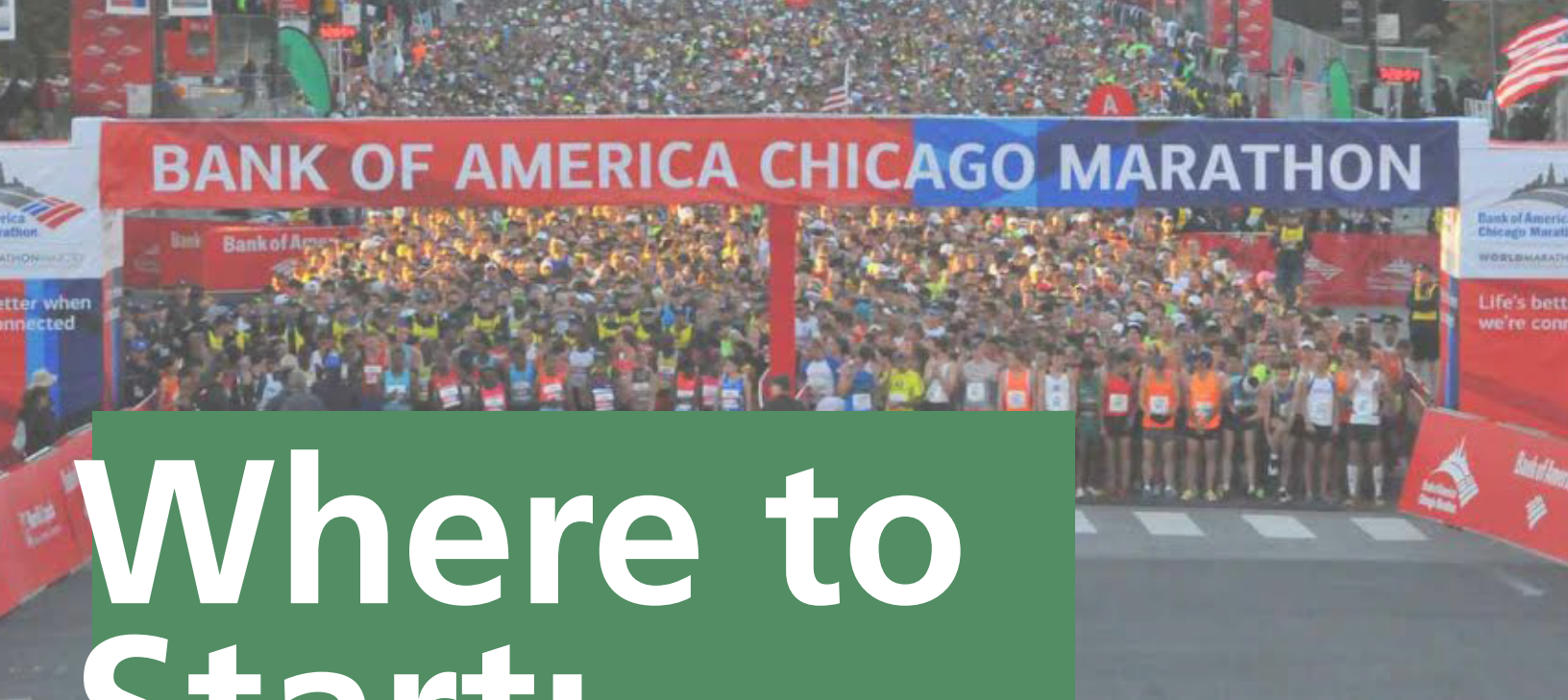
Thank you for choosing Mercy Home as the recipient of your charity running fundraising. Whether you are running our hometown signature event, the 2024 Bank of America Chicago Marathon, or one of the many other endurance sports activities available to you, we are extremely grateful for your support. You, and Heroes like you, provide close to a million dollars of support annually that allows us to provide children in crisis with healing from trauma, the ability to get back on track with their education, and plan for their future.

This guide is meant to provide a snapshot of what you need to know and can expect from your journey as a Mercy Home Hero. Please bookmark it or download it to keep it handy. I am also available via phone or in-person if you would like to set up a time to connect with me for any reason, you can access my calendar [here](#). I am looking forward to meeting you and seeing you through this journey.

Most Sincerely,

Mary

Mary G. Connolly
Leader and Coach
Heros Endurance Fundraising



Where to Start:

1.

[Your fundraising page](#) was set up automatically when you registered with us. You can customize it to explain why you're running a marathon, why you chose to run for Mercy Home, and add a picture. Accessing it is easy..

Chicago Marathon Heroes, log in [here](#). Heroes for all other events, including Heroes Choice, log in [here](#). If you do not recall the passcode you set up when you registered with us, just click on "forgot" and you can set up a new one.

2.

Make sure you receive important team communications. In case you missed the check box on the Heroes registration form, sign up to receive our exclusive Heroes eNews. It contains everything you need to conquer the course and your fundraising goal. Saying yes only subscribes you to Heroes news from Mercy Home. [Yes, send me the eNews!](#)

3.

[Our website](#) is a great resource to help you learn more about who we are and what we do. We also have a Heroes Team exclusive [Heroes Hub](#) that is your tool kit providing both fundraising and training tips, communications templates, the Heroes blog, and a calendar of events (in-person and virtual).

4.

Donate to your own fundraiser! That shows donors you're financially committed yourself. Remember your gift will set the bar, so make it as personally meaningful as possible. Plus, stats show runners who donate to their own fundraiser raise twice as much!

5.

Follow us on social media to stay current on Mercy Home for Boys and Girls and Mercy Home Heroes. And remember to tag @mercyhomeheroes when posting your fundraising page and those training pics! Instaram [here](#), and Facebook [here](#).



Team Jerseys

All Heroes (with addresses in the continental US) running the 2024 Chicago Marathon (or other fall event) will receive the Heroes Team Jersey in the mail no later than the first week in June. Please review the address in your profile to confirm it is accurate and complete. All international (plus Alaska & Hawaii) runners will receive jerseys at the Marathon Expo. Anyone participating in a spring event will receive the jersey in time for the event.



Fundraising

Getting Started

All Mercy Home Heroes are expected to achieve their minimum fundraising requirement by the date of your event. Fundraising is “no matter what” so if you become injured or life has gotten in the way of your training, please notify us at the earliest possible moment so we can help you navigate that challenge.

[8 Steps to Charity Running Success](#) provides an easy-to-follow fundraising plan, especially for first timers. Also please check out our other [fundraising guides](#) in the Heroes Hub for more tips.

If you encounter challenges in your fundraising or feel you’ve hit a road block at any time, please [schedule a call](#) with Mary for fundraising coaching. We are here to help you succeed.

Key Milestone Dates / Incentive Prizes

- Feb 2** All Heroes at or above \$250 receive Heroes custom running socks, plus entry into a drawing for a pair of shoes from retail partner Dick Pond Athletics (up to \$160 value redeemable in store or online).
- June 8** All Heroes to reach \$1,250 receive a Heroes custom Nalgene® Water bottle, plus entry into a drawing for a Brooks Grand Prize package from retail partner Dick Pond Athletics (up to \$500 value redeemable in store or online).
- Sept 13** All Heroes to reach fundraising minimum are entered into a drawing for a Brooks Grand Prize package from retail partner Dick Pond Athletics (up to \$500 value redeemable in store or online).
- Oct 8** FINAL FUNDRAISING DEADLINE. All Heroes are expected to have raised their minimum. Heroes who exceed their minimum by \$500 will receive a Heroes custom Sprints Hat. Those who exceed it by \$1000, \$3500, or \$7500 will also receive prizes of Heroes custom gear and apparel to be announced.



Fundraising Cont.

Referral Credits

We have referral credits to encourage you to invite family and friends to join you as a Mercy Home Hero. Current Heroes who refer new Heroes to this year's Chicago Marathon team can earn a \$250 fundraising credit for each new Hero recruited. More details on the referral program and how to locate your referral code can be found [here](#). You can also give it to the runner instead if you choose or even split it down the middle.

Matching Gifts

Did you know you could easily double or triple your gifts to Mercy Home's kids through your employer? All you need to do is check if your company matches through our [website](#) and submit a match request. And remind your donors to check with their companies, too.

To learn more, contact our Matching Gifts Coordinator, Kathryn Tourville. She can be reached by phone at (312) 738-7589 and by email at kattou@mercyhome.org. Creating matching gifts through your employer is an efficient way to reach your marathon goal - especially when your co-workers are donors too!



Training

CARA

The Chicago Area Runners Association (CARA) is the official training partner for Mercy Home Heroes. CARA's "Power of the Group" will provide the support, community, and accountability you need to successfully reach the finish line. Chicago's premier group training program includes pace group leaders from 7:30 up to 13 minutes per mile.

They provide training for all of our fall marathon runners and those running the 2024 Bank of America Chicago 13.1 who sign up before March 1. Everyone is automatically registered with CARA for training when you register with us for these events. There is no need to register separately.

This is a great benefit, and we urge you to take advantage of it. Having a plan to follow takes the guess work out of training, and having someone to run with helps a lot too! For more on the CARA training benefit, see [this post](#) in Heroes Hub or visit [CARA's website](#). But remember, you are automatically registered and your training packet will be mailed to you.

Key Training Dates for Fall Marathons:

May 29 Summer Marathon Training Packet Mailing (for those signed up for in-person group training your packet will be mailed, you DO NOT need to go anywhere to pick it up.

June 10 Marathon Training begins

Aug 11 Heroes Exclusive Event: Final 10 Course Preview Run leaving from Mercy Home

Sept 22 CARA Ready to Run 20 Miler



Mark Your Calendar!

For the full up-to-date list of all events and team engagement opportunities stay connected through the [2024 Heroes Face Book Group](#), [Strava Group](#), and connect to our [Heroes Calendar](#).

First Official Team Event:

June 5 Marathon Team Kick-Off & Global Running Day Celebration at Mercy Home. 5k Fun Run followed by tacos and beer. 5:30-8:00 p.m.

We also have a spectacular 2024 Bank of America Chicago Marathon planned. Although make sure you also save these days for marathon weekend:

Oct 10-12 Abbott Health & Fitness Expo (must attend to secure race bib)

Oct 11 Pasta Dinner at Mercy Home (happy hour @ 5:30; dinner & program @ 6:30)

Oct 13 Marathon Day!

Heroes HQ at De Paul's Loop campus opens at 5:30 a.m. to all runners. Team photo at 6:30 a.m. Indoor restrooms, gear check & snacks/hydration.

Heroes Shuttle will take your family and friends from HQ to the Mercy Mile (17) to cheer for you with our kids as you pass Mercy Home for Boys & Girls.

Post Race back at HQ you will be given a Hero's welcome where you can reunite and celebrate with your cheer squad, claim your gear, get a massage and enjoy a full lunch buffet.

* Be on the lookout for more details and registration for these events as we get closer.



Additional Opportunities

To Support the Kids as a Mercy Home Hero

NYC Half - Sunday, March 17, 2024 (SOLD OUT FOR 2024)

This is your chance to run through Times Square as a Mercy Home Hero. We have a limited number of spots for this iconic New York City race. The fundraising minimum is \$1,500, but we are looking for heroes willing to go beyond the minimum.

Shamrock Shuffle – Sunday, March 24, 2024

With over 20,000 runners winding their way through downtown Chicago, this famed 8K race has all the energy and excitement of the marathon. Minimum fundraising commitment of \$250.

Chicago 13.1 - Sunday, June 9, 2024

Run the Chicago Half Marathon! Mercy Home was chosen to be one of only six charity partners for the Inaugural Bank of America Chicago 13.1 last year because of the positive impact we have on children and families on Chicago's West Side. Minimum fundraising commitment of \$500.

Hero's Choice

You pick the event. You pick the date. Sign yourself up with them and us and start fundraising.

Register for any of these opportunities: [Mercy Home Heroes Endurance Fundraising](#).



Additional Questions?

Bank of America Chicago Marathon: Their [Participants' Guide](#) contains the answers to all your marathon related questions.

Chicago Area Runners Association: Additional training opportunities and a list of local races can be found on [CARA's website](#).

Mercy Home Heroes Frequently Asked Questions: We have answers to many of additional questions that Heroes have asked over the years. [FAQ for Current Heroes](#).

Heroes Staff Team: Finally, if you still need assistance in any way, we are here to help.

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