

1999 BOSTON MARATHON®



JIMMY FUND WALK



Brian M. Richards
Hopkinton to Copley Square
October 17, 1999

I arrived in Massachusetts the day before the Walk and stayed at a motel in Milford. I decided to forgo the pasta dinner as I was not too sure how to get to Wellesley. I watched my favorite team, the Boston Red Sox, beat the New York Yankees in the American League playoffs, and went to bed. I did not get much sleep, and was up at 3:30 AM. Driving through Hopkinton reminded me of a town straight out of a Norman Rockwell painting, going back to the 1950^{ies}. I was perplexed on how hilly Hopkinton is. I have been told that the Boston Marathon is at a higher elevation at Hopkinton than in Boston, but I sure found out fast that there were still a lot of hills throughout the route. I parked my car and went to the start point approximately 300 yards away at the town gazebo. Although I had already registered I went to the registration point at a school, where I met Emily Symer, the director of the Boston Marathon Jimmy Fund Walk (BMJFW). I talked briefly, mentioning that my shoulder doctor lifted all restrictions except for heavy lifting, but I still have times when I will feel twinges of pain. I also told Emily that I raised over \$2,600 for the walk in 1999, bringing my 12-year total to over \$40,000 for the Jimmy Fund.

I walked to what appeared to be the start line and asked a



volunteer if the route started down Route 135 East. I talked to a veteran of the Walk and was advised to start early, as one would be stuck at walking at a pace that would be slow due to the crowd. The official start time in Hopkinton was at 7 AM, but it is not enforced. I left at 6:15 AM. It was dark but relatively safe. The route starts out on the left side of the road. Since the roads are not closed to the BMJFW, one had to stay as close to the edge of the road as possible. The first part of the route was going down a very steep hill. It would have been an



couple of the volunteers from the Inline Club asked if I needed help. I said I'm not moving. They quickly phoned ahead asking for someone to give me a ride to next water stop. I was informed that it was only 2 tenths of a mile to the next stop, so I said I could make it there. A nurse met me at the stop and took my vital signs. I never thought that my left shoulder would cause so much pain doing a walk. This shoulder is the one I broke in four places in 1998 and

ideal hill if one was riding a bicycle, but as will all hills that go down, they do go up. In fact the entire route until I hit Wellesley consisted on going up and down hills. At approximately 6:45 AM a tractor-trailer carrying traffic cones was passing me on my right, and a volunteer was running and placing the cones on the left side of the road. This was intended to warn motorists that a fundraising walk was there was no shoulder for the walkers to walk on. The first water stop was in the process of setting up when I arrived. I decided not to wait for a drink of water and continued on my way on the walk. There are 13 water stops along the 26.2 mile route, with most of them spaced out over the last half of the walk. I noticed that the water stops were not as fancy as last year, where various companies sponsoring stops were lavishly displayed, but they were better than last year as there was plenty of water and fruit juices. They still had one pet peeve of mine of serving the water in small paper cups. I just grabbed three of four cups at each stop, plus two juice cartons to ensure I was adequately hydrated.

The route is well mapped out with markers at every mile, along with a poster picture of a child from Dana Farber, giving an extra incentive to continue on with the walk. The route changed from the left-hand side of the road to the right-hand side at the 6-mile point. It wasn't until the 10-mile point that I noticed my left shoulder was in extreme pain. My legs were starting to cramp up and my left shoulder was in intense pain so I just sat down at the 10-mile marker. The event had the Inline Club of Boston patrolling the route. These were volunteers on roller blades who patrolled the route looking for walkers in trouble. Each one of these volunteers had to raise the minimum of \$100 to participate in the event plus the \$15 entrance fee. A

had a portion of it replaced with prosthesis. I talked with the nurse's husband and he gave me a spiel that the walk goes down in elevation as one progresses along the route. That may be true but I told the person going down in elevation does not help if one is constantly going up and down on the route. I got a ride from the busses that go along the route picking up walkers in distress. I went 3.8 miles to get in a Wellesley High School, a mid way lunch and water stop. I saw the nurse and she advised me to drop out. I went and grabbed a bite to eat and never thought a turkey and cheese along with a peanut butter and jelly sandwich with two fruit juices would taste so great and brighten my spirits, but it did. I got tired of waiting for the bus for a trip to Boston, so I decided I would walk to the Woodland MBTA stop that is along the route, and catch a train to Boston, then catch a ride back to Hopkinton. To stop my pain from my left shoulder I just put my left arm in my pants pocket. That move significantly stopped my pain. As I was





on the route the hills sure become discouraging. I smiled when I got to mile 25 as I saw the famous Citgo sign in front of me and Fenway Park on my right. I stopped and made a silent request to God to allow me to finish this walk and in return I promised God to be in better shape in the year 2000. I had to smile again as I was approaching the finish line. I received my medal, quickly grabbed a bite to eat, and took the bus back to Hopkinton.

approaching the MBTA station I decided to continue on, knowing that I could just stop at any of the stops along the way and get a ride in. I noticed quite a few of the walkers were wearing some type of headphones to listen to music along the route as it is basically boring. Next year I plan on doing the same.



I keep looking on the route for where Heart Break Hill starts, but could never find the statue of John A. Kelley that marks the begging of the hills. With this being my second BMJFW, I realized that Heart Break Hill is really not that steep compared to the other hills on the walk, but after 20 miles

In closing, you are probably wondering why someone would want to torture his body on a marathon walk just to raise money for the Jimmy Fund. My grandmother, whom I never met, died of cancer at 48. My mother died at 40. My father's 40-month battle with colon cancer came to an end on September 10, 1988. I am going to keep raising money for cancer research until I cannot get the sponsors or the Good Lord tells me to put down my walking shoes. I hope you will consider sponsoring me next year so I can walk for the Jimmy Fund. It is in my parent's names, Joseph Albert (a 1988 Sponsor) and Kathleen Marie Richards that I hereby dedicate my walk to. Until next year.

Brian M. Richards



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The 1999 Boston Marathon  Jimmy Fund Walk
Walking for our loved ones Both Past and Present

In Memory of

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Joe Rogozenski, Karen Snyder, Margaret Staples, Helen Zachary



Mom & Dad would be proud. Until next year.

Thank you and May God Bless.

Brian M. Richards