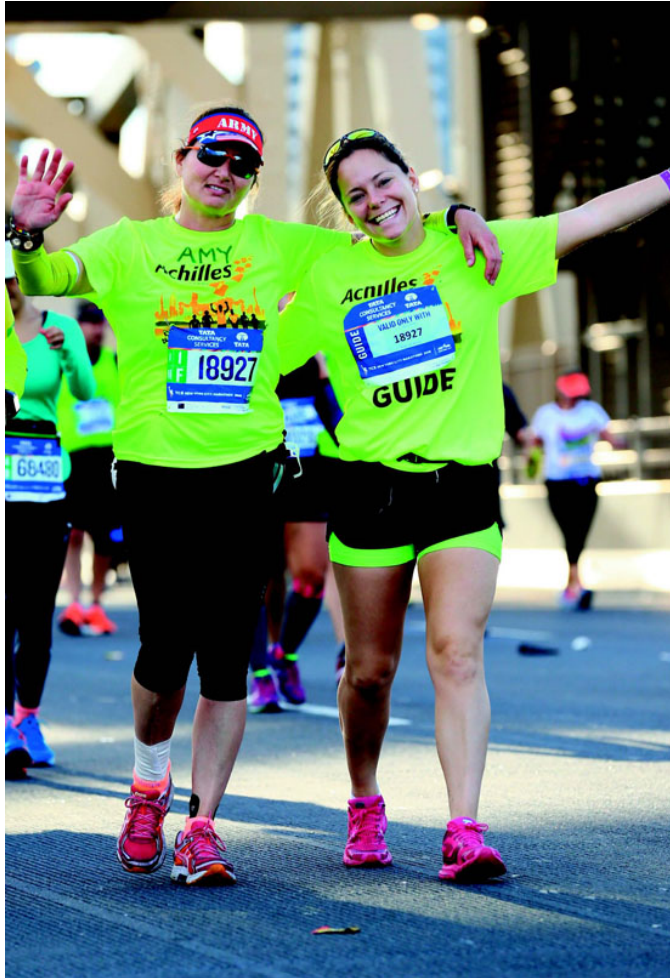


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## Disabled Runner a Victor in NYC Marathon

By Chris Lavin



Amy Morosini of Moraga, left, with her official escort, Natalie DiBlasio, at the finish line of the New York City Marathon. Photos provided

unlike the other four marathons she has run, she was amazed at the level of support and organization.

"As soon as you got off the Verrazano Bridge, the fans were 10 people deep," she said. Besides having rehydration and nutrition stations every mile, "the people of New York just came out and handed things out - like bananas, and it was the day after Halloween so they had candy."

Morosini and her escort, Natalie DiBlasio, had to stop at a medical tent around the halfway mark. "My right ankle was hurting really badly," Morosini said. She thought she might have a stress fracture. She had it wrapped, but from then on, there was a lot of walking.

"But when we got to Central Park, and saw the finish line, I grabbed Natalie's hand and said, 'Let's do this,'" Morosini said. They ran the rest of the way, crossed the line, and raised their arms in victory, 7 hours and 17 minutes since their standing ovation.

"I went to complete, not compete," she said. Mission accomplished.

After surviving a fall from a third-floor apartment window more than two decades ago, leaving her with permanent traumatic brain injury, Moraga runner Amy Morosini now has a new medal to add to her collection: She completed the New York City Marathon Nov. 1.

"It was the greatest experience of my life," Morosini said. "Without question."

Morosini went to New York as part of the Achilles Institute, an organization that helps disabled runners get into and finish the race. Each runner gets to take an escort in case there is trouble along the 26-mile route. With 50,000 runners overall, the start is staggered, and disabled runners start first. Morosini found herself preparing for the race with people tuning up their wheelchairs or fiddling with their prosthetic legs.

"At one point I found myself running next to a blind runner," she said. He had to have several escorts, one on all sides. And one runner in a wheelchair had to take the hills backward because it was easier to push that way.

Before she went to New York someone told her that she should write her name on her bright yellow bib - a bib that marked her as part of the disabled group. She got out a Sharpie and wrote a big AMY. She hadn't known what to expect, and what she found blew her away.

"As we walked to the start, all the other runners gave us a standing ovation," she said. People starting yelling her name: "Go, Amy! You can do this, Amy." She said she must have heard her name called out 300 times along the route. And



Amy Morosini of Moraga at the New York City Marathon with Kyle Pease of Atlanta, Georgia, who has cerebral palsy, and whose wheelchair broke at Mile 16 and he ended up being carried the rest of the way by other marathoners.

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[back](#)

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