



Written By:

Stacy Simon (</cancer/acs-medical-content-and-news-staff.html>)

Senior Editor, News


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Breast Cancer Survivor Reaches Marathon Goals

 Jun 7, 2019



Just after crossing the finish line at the London Marathon in April 2019, Fran Boyd headed to the Abbott World Marathon booth. She was one of 40,000 runners that day. Hundreds of thousands more had come out to watch and cheer. Boyd says she was enjoying the experience so much, she added an extra mile to her time just weaving in and out during the course.

At the booth, Boyd was met by the director of the Boston Marathon, who presented her the Six Star Finisher medal. He asked, “What’s your story?” Boyd said, “I’m a cancer survivor (</cancer/breast-cancer/living-as-a-breast-cancer-survivor.html>) and I just hit my 5-year mark.” Then she began to cry.

The medal signified that Boyd had just become one of only 6,000 or so people worldwide to complete the World Majors, 6 of the biggest and most famous marathons: Tokyo, Boston, London, Berlin, Chicago, and New York. It was the fulfillment of a personal goal she’d set in 2016. “I live every day to the fullest, and running races is my excuse to travel,” she said.

‘A mammogram saved my life’

After a routine mammogram (</cancer/breast-cancer/screening-tests-and-early-detection/american-cancer-society-recommendations-for-the-early-detection-of-breast-cancer.html>) in 2013 Boyd found out she had breast cancer (</cancer/breast-cancer.html>). Doctors told her it was an aggressive type, but it had been found early and hadn't spread to any lymph nodes. She was treated with surgery (</cancer/breast-cancer/treatment/surgery-for-breast-cancer.html>) and chemotherapy (</cancer/breast-cancer/treatment/chemotherapy-for-breast-cancer.html>), then had breast reconstruction (</cancer/breast-cancer/reconstruction-surgery.html>).

Boyd was a runner before her diagnosis and wanted to stay active during treatment. She had a lot less energy at that time, so she walked a little and ran a little with the support of her running friends who were by her side. Boyd remembers her doctor telling her that her physical fitness before her diagnosis and getting physical activity during treatment helped her through the whole process.

Follow-up tests (</cancer/breast-cancer/living-as-a-breast-cancer-survivor/follow-up-care-after-breast-cancer-treatment.html>) over the years have shown no evidence of cancer. She says, “An annual mammogram saved my life.”

Future goals

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Going through cancer is hard, especially the unknown. At first, it's scary. I want to tell people they can get to the other side.

After she finished chemotherapy, Boyd began training hard. Her first race after cancer treatment was the Kentucky Derby Marathon in April 2014. She now has 24 marathons under her belt – 3 before diagnosis and 21 after.

“Whenever I don't feel like training I say to myself: You get to run, and you can run,” said Boyd. “Going through cancer is hard, especially the unknown. At first, it's scary. I want to tell people they can get to the other side.”

She's run races on 3 continents and her next goal is to complete a race on all 7.

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