



Inspire Others This Holiday: Top 5 Ways to Give



1. Run a Race

Whether you are walking a 5k or trudging through a muddy race course, make your miles count by fundraising for a December race. Email Cathryn@backonmyfeet.org to learn more about dedicating your miles to Back on My Feet.

2. Dedicate your December Birthday

When you blow out the candles this December, what will you wish for? If your wish includes helping a person reach his or her potential by working towards self-sufficiency, make the choice to [dedicate your December birthday to Back on My Feet](#).

3. Give a Meaningful Gift

Looking to give a gift that is both unique and meaningful? [Make a donation to Back on My Feet](#) this holiday in honor of a friend or loved one. When you do, BoMF will let them know that you have given the gift of self-sufficiency on their behalf. [Encourage others to do the same for you.](#)

4. Send a Prayer

Each morning we start our day with the serenity prayer as a way to ground ourselves and to ask for the courage to push ourselves to do more. This season, inquire if your place of worship will collect donations to benefit Back on My Feet. Email Cathryn@backonmyfeet.org to find out more about in-kind donations or collections.

5. Substitute Your Holiday Party

Dreading another office gift-giving party? Ask your [coworkers to substitute their holiday gift for a donation](#) to a worthy cause and make your office holiday party something worth celebrating!

Make A Contribution

The True Meaning of Team

Yes, we all carb load together, sync our alarm clocks for the same morning runs and willingly sport ridiculously tight Back on My Feet lime green sweatbands. Despite these commonalities, we sometimes do not have the opportunity to meet the people we are so closely connected with through Back on My Feet...until race day.

For many of us, this is the day that we discover our limits, uncover hidden potential, and thrive off of the positivity that fuels our finish. We are unified by one goal: crossing the finish line.

Below are the stories of two non-residential members who met on race day. Inspired by the day's events and the encouragement that led them to the finish, they both documented their stories to share with Back on My Feet (unaware that the other felt compelled to do so as well).

-Cathryn Sanderson, Director of Communications and Corporate Relations



Never run alone.

That was one of the first things I heard when I joined Back on My Feet. Yesterday at the Philly Marathon I realized that statement is one of the many reasons that I love being part of BoMF. BoMF is not about running. That just happens to be the activity that we all love doing. I've been a member of BoMF for two years and some of my proudest running memories have been because I was not running alone. Helping Back on My Feet members through their first mile or their first half marathon has been a more satisfying feeling than my own accomplishments.

Yesterday was my ninth full marathon and I was just running it for fun (in my panda outfit) and pride since the Philly marathon has "beaten" me twice before. On mile two I ran into Troy, a BoMF alumni that I have known for two years. I ran/walked one of his first miles with BoMF. I decided to pace him to finish the half. Never run alone I was thinking. For anyone who knows Troy they know that he has a heart of gold and works hard to

reach his goals. Troy was hurting but he kept pushing until we finally got close enough to see the finish line and I watched him cross the finish line with a brand new half marathon personal record.

I turned back around to go run the second half of my marathon. I figured that I would be alone the rest of the way but at mile 16 I run into girl from BoMF running the full. Her name is Elizabeth and she fundraised for the race. It was her first full marathon. She seemed to be struggling at that point. Again I knew that I couldn't let her run alone. We ended up running the rest of the way together. We talked about BoMF, running and traveling...whatever we could do to get us through the next ten miles. She got to see her family in Manayunk. We had an amazing brownie at mile 20. She passed on the bacon but I couldn't help myself. We got to half a mile from the finish and Olani, a residential member from OBP, and Elizabeth's two friends started running with us to the finish. She finished strong and with four people by her side .



When she crossed the finish line she put her hands up to celebrate. ***When she crossed the finish line words cannot say how proud and happy she was.*** I remember that feeling from finishing my first full. It's happiness, pain, exhaustion, and pride all mixed up together. I congratulated her on her amazing accomplishment but I never got a chance to thank her. If it wasn't for Elizabeth and Troy, I wouldn't have finished the marathon. They made sure that I wasn't running alone.

Congrats to Elizabeth from OBP. You are now a marathoner.

By Wesley C., Non-Residential Member, St. John's Hospice

Friends and strangers.

When I signed up for the marathon I wasn't worried about finishing 26.2 miles but started to feel the pain around mile 14 and began worrying about finishing the race. At mile 15, when I saw Wesley in his panda suit and unmistakable lime green BoMF sweatband, I decided to introduce myself. I had never met Wesley before but quickly learned that he fully represents the sense of community and support that is at the heart of Back on My Feet.

He ended up sticking with me from mile 15 to the end of the race. When I needed to slow down he did and when I was really hurting he kept me distracted and motivated. He kept up the conversation for the entire 11 miles we ran together- not worrying about his own time and not worrying about how quickly he was going to

finish.

Wesley stuck with me through the finish when I began shaking and crying, not from the pain but from the overwhelming emotion that came from the amount of support that I had received. The fact that I had never met him before yet he was willing to help me out through my first marathon simply because we both had Back on My Feet in common was something that absolutely portrays what Back on My Feet is all about.

The intensity of support that the members have for each other is something that is not easy to find. ***There is a selflessness from team members who are always willing to stay behind with another runner.*** I experience this during BoMF runs each week and also experienced it during this race.

I am completely humbled by the encouragement of teammates and strangers. I feel an indescribable gratitude towards Back on My Feet and everyone who had helped me through my first marathon.

By Elizabeth C., Non-Residential Member, Our Brother's Place

Check out more [photos from the Philadelphia Marathon](#) and [visit our Facebook page](#) for more inspiring stories!

Green Headband Alert

As soon as I started running down Chestnut Street I was on "Green Headband High Alert". And every time I saw someone from BoMF cheering I would run over, but they were always on the other side of the street I was running. So I would cross over across all the runners to greet them, nearly causing a bunch of multi-runner pileups!!! But we came through unscathed! - David B. Residential Member, New Jerusalem

I could not have been more proud to be a part of Back on My Feet than I was on Sunday. -Laura S. Back on My Feet Staff & Non-Residential Member, Our Brother's Place

Thank you for all you did to make it such a memorable event! The best part for me was being able to congratulate Mr. Randolph for his accomplishment. What an achievement! - Betty O., FundRacer

Where was Back on My Feet this month?

At your company...

Thank you to every company that participated in the [Back on My Feet National Sneaker Week](#) during Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week. Your \$5 donations amounted to thousands of dollars to support our local chapter. We hope you enjoyed the comfort of wearing your sneakers to work and knowing that you helped move many members forward in our program.



Laura and I got SO much encouragement from the crowd for being a part of the Back on My Feet team---very inspirational. Several times we thought about the members of BoMF who go running at 5:30 in the morning while dealing with homelessness, and we knew that in the large scheme we had it easy. It felt good to know that we were struggling for something much larger than ourselves. - Sky P., FundRacer

Running with my husband and kids hand-in-hand across the finish line of the marathon was absolutely the best time I've ever had in my entire life. We're both so grateful to be a part of Back on My Feet! - Laura P., FundRacer

For the last two miles, the tears didn't stop, but neither did his words of support. I can't even begin to describe how much he did for me those last



On the dance floor...

The 5th Annual Bash presented by Stroehmann Bakeries proved that we have much more to offer than just our fast race times. Back on My Feet Philadelphia will forever be remembered for the amazing moves that were displayed on the dance floor.

We were honored to present Randolph R. with the Residential Member of the Year award and Daniel C. with the Non-Residential Member of the Year Award.

"I've learned that friendship doesn't know race, that it doesn't know gender, and that it certainly doesn't know income. I've learned that, in the dead of winter, in freezing cold temperatures, that 5:30 in the morning can somehow be the warmest and brightest part of my day. And it's my experience,

miles. He reminded me of all the mornings we had run to City Hall and back – the same distance that I had left in the race. He reminded me of all the times I had been there to support him and how much he was willing to be there to support me. And finally, he reminded how much faith he had in me and how much faith complete strangers had in me.-

Caitlin C., Team Leader, Ready Willing & Able
(speaking of her experience with Residential Member, Therion M., who ran her to the finish line of her first marathon)

Read more about Caitlin's story on our [Facebook page](#).

that I don't know of anything stronger than a group of people coming together to take a step forward."
– Daniel C., Non-Residential Member

See you all next year at our 6th Annual Bash!



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