In 2013, Achilles further enhanced our mission of helping people with disabilities to be active and achieve. Our core programs include Hope and Possibility Races; Achilles Kids; the Marathon Tour; the Freedom Team of Wounded Veterans; National and International Chapters; and the New York Chapter. Achilles has seen throughout the year that working hard towards an ambitious goal can change the lives of people with disabilities.

Hope and Possibility
The Hope and Possibility race was inspired by our founding board chair Trisha Meili’s best-selling memoir *I Am The Central Park Jogger: A Story of Hope & Possibility*. The event is the largest of its kind for able bodied and disabled athletes to compete side by side. Prizes and recognition are provided for the able-bodied participants as well as several divisions of disabled competitors. New York’s 2013 Hope and Possibility 5 Mile Race, held in Central Park, had over 5,000 participants. Following the adult race, approximately five hundred children with and without disabilities took part in dashes. Our Achilles Kids training program participants ran the full five mile race for the second year in a row. General Motors and Cigna both had a significant presence in the event, as participants, sponsors, and guides. Other valued sponsors included U-Haul and Goldman Sachs.

Achilles Kids
2013 was an exciting year for Achilles Kids. The program continues to grow, currently serving 6,000 children with disabilities in more than one hundred fifty schools. Development is taking place both in and out of New York with chapters in Talladega, Florida; Indianapolis, Indiana; Salt Lake City, Utah; Phoenix, Arizona; Providence, Rhode Island; San Diego, California; Roanoke, Lynchburg, and Buena Vista, Virginia; and Mantua and Princeton, New Jersey. The students have a goal of completing a total of 26.2 miles in their adaptive physical education classes throughout the year. Those who do receive sneakers to reward their effort and encourage achievement. In 2013 Achilles Kids again saw a record number of virtual marathoners – 3,515!

In New York City, the Achilles Kids weekend program holds fun themed workouts on Saturday mornings at the Jewish Community Center. Our training program continued to groom future marathon runners with weekly workouts in Central Park and regular mainstream races of varying distances.
The Marathon Tour and the New York City Marathon

The 2013 Achilles Marathon Tour consisted of more than twelve races where Achilles members competed with able-bodied athletes. The team participated in races in Williamsburg; Miami; Los Angeles; Boston; San Diego; Chicago; Washington, DC; New York City; Ft. Lauderdale; Palm Beach; Detroit; and Orlando. The centerpiece of our marathon tour continues to be the NYC Marathon, where more than 200 Achilles athletes with disabilities from around the world compete. In 2013, members of the Cigna/Achilles referral program, an innovative program that offers coaching to people on long term disability to help them return to work, life and health, also participated in mainstream races throughout the country.

The Achilles Freedom Team of Wounded Veterans

The Freedom Team is a rehabilitation program helping wounded veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan to be active, compete, and achieve. Achilles continues to work with physical and occupational therapists at military hospitals to recruit members and help them train for mainstream races on foot or in handcrank wheelchairs. As the numbers of newly wounded soldiers begins to dial down, Achilles has redirected our focus to supporting veterans who have returned to their home communities. General Motors has emerged as key sponsor of this rehabilitation program. A key innovation is the development of a new, sturdier, handcrank developed in conjunction with Michigan Tech engineering students.

National and International Chapters

Achilles has 65 locations in the United States and abroad. Our chapters in the United States have shown renewed variety, training and racing locally as well as travelling to Marathon Tour races where they join fellow Achilles athletes. Chapters in Nashville, Denver, Palm Beach, Pittsburgh, and Philadelphia are helping Achilles spread its mission of achievement through athletics across the country. International chapters train and race actively in their home countries often with a goal of competing in the NYC Marathon.

The New York City Chapter

The New York Chapter is the Achilles flagship. It provides opportunities to train, race, and socialize for people with disabilities in the NY Metro area. The team meets twice a week in Central Park for workouts and participates in monthly races. There are social gatherings throughout the year. The group is diverse in terms of disability, athleticism, and demographics but shares a common belief in the importance of a healthy lifestyle. The Achilles Triathlon team continued to offer opportunities for athletes to participate in multisport competitions.

Sponsors

Achilles is very grateful to our sponsors. Our work would not be possible without funds and in kind contributions from numerous foundations, corporations, and individual donors. We are especially appreciative to our board of directors for their leadership and commitment.