



The President's Marathon Challenge

There is something special about tackling a challenge that seems almost impossible at the outset. When I completed my first Boston Marathon, I thought it was one of the greatest accomplishments of my life. I still do.

— Tufts President
Lawrence S. Bacow

This is the last year the challenge will be led by President Bacow, who is stepping down in June. President Bacow has finished five Boston marathons with the Tufts team.

The President's Marathon Challenge

is the largest known collegiate marathon program in the United States. Each year the PMC inspires 200 members of the Tufts community to run the Boston Marathon while at the same time supporting nutrition and fitness programs at the university. Since the challenge was launched by President Lawrence S. Bacow in 2003, over a thousand runners have raised nearly \$3 million toward research and education in health and wellness. The fundraising target for the 2011 marathon season is \$650,000.

The Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, part of a constellation of schools in the health sciences at Tufts, benefits greatly from the President's Marathon Challenge. The Friedman School is an international leader in nutrition research and policy. Friedman's efforts in the community to fight obesity and to build stronger and healthier lives have made headlines; its promotion of organic farming and sustainable food systems has encouraged people to eat better and has boosted local agriculture; its contributions to humanitarian relief and to domestic and international food policy have had wide-reaching effects around the globe.

Through our partnership with John Hancock Financial Services, Tufts has been the proud beneficiary of Boston Marathon numbers since the PMC began in 2003. John Hancock's commitment to Tufts has helped raise nearly \$3 million for health and nutrition initiatives!

The Friedman School has impact beyond its small size. With only 1,100 alumni, however, the Friedman School relies on the generous support of friends like you. Your support of a runner in the President's Marathon Challenge helps the Friedman School in its innovative and important work. The PMC also supports the Personalized Performance Program, in which experienced student trainers provide customized approaches to achieving fitness related goals for Tufts community members.

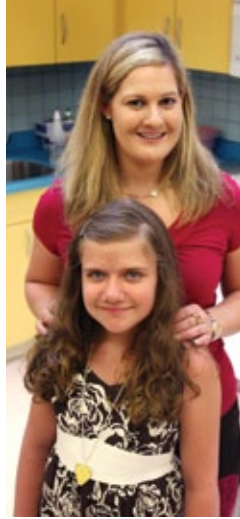
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At 10, Madison Worden designs her own clothing and sold enough of her hand-made jewelry to buy a Yorkshire terrier puppy with her own money. Her backpack is not a fashion statement, though. It contains a feeding pump that delivers nutrients to her body through a tube inserted into her abdomen.

Madison has mitochondrial disease, which severely limits the body's ability to absorb energy from foods. The feeding pump is part of a diet regimen created by dietitian Abby Usen of Floating Hospital for Children at Tufts Medical Center. Usen is a graduate of the master's degree in nutrition and dietetic internship program at the Frances Stern Nutrition Center at the Friedman School and Tufts Medical Center. She helps Madison get the energy to go to school, socialize with friends, and enjoy her life. Your support helps train outstanding dietitians like Abby.

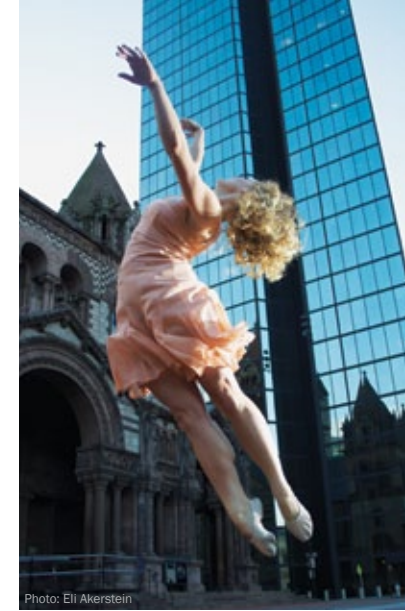


It takes a village—and years of solid research—to fight childhood obesity, say Friedman researchers who mobilized the city of Somerville, Mass., to promote healthful eating and active lifestyles.

Dr. Christina Economos and colleagues launched Shape Up Somerville, a community-based research intervention that encouraged school cafeterias to swap French fries for fresh fruit and got kids moving before, during, and after school.

Dr. Economos is an associate professor at the Friedman School, holds the New Balance Chair in Childhood Nutrition, and is the associate director of the John Hancock Research Center on Physical Activity, Nutrition, and Obesity Prevention. At the outset, she and her team found more than 40 percent of Somerville's young children were obese, reflecting nationwide childhood weight trends.

The Friedman researchers joined with community partners and Mayor Joseph Curtatone to galvanize residents around the goal of helping young children lead healthier lives. Shape Up Somerville's success has made headlines across the country. As part of her *Let's Move* initiative to solve the epidemic of childhood obesity, First Lady Michelle Obama highlighted the program as a model, and the program is also being replicated in three other U.S. cities.



Last year, Friedman doctoral candidate Lara Park choreographed her thesis as a finalist in the national Dance Your PhD competition.

"The more you practice being creative in one area," Park says, "the more creative you become overall. As a scientist, the more creative you are, the better equipped you'll be to meet the challenges of research." In her dance, Park represents a cluster of elements called the methyl group, which helps keep DNA healthy. "It was fun to figure out how to relate cellular structures to moving bodies," she says. If it weren't for scholarship support, the contemporary dancer would not have the opportunity to pursue her studies—or to apply her knowledge creatively: "My scholarship spurs me on to do better work because I know how much others believe in me."

"They are stronger, they are sleeping better, and they feel better,"

fitness instructor Jo-Anne Gibely of Salem, Mass., says of the students ages 50 to 93 in a class she teaches called StrongWomen, a strength-training course for middle-age and older women designed by researchers at the Friedman School.

Dr. Miriam Nelson, director of the John Hancock Research Center and co-captain of the President's Marathon Challenge, is lead researcher behind the StrongWomen program. Nelson has spent decades documenting how strength training can boost the well-being of midlife and older women and reduce symptoms of age-related illnesses such as arthritis, diabetes, osteoporosis, and depression. She has written several books on women's fitness, including *Strong Women Stay Young* and *Strong Women, Strong Bones*, which sold more than a million copies and was featured on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*.

The StrongWomen program Nelson helped launch now helps tens of thousands of women in 40 states achieve greater health, and serves as a successful model of how research findings can be translated into action across the nation.



More than 20 personal fitness consultants are supported

by the President's Marathon Challenge. Alia Hastings, A07, MG08, was one of them, guiding students, staff, and faculty through custom workouts as part of Tufts' Personalized Performance Program.

As a double major in community health and psychology, Alia pursued a five-year program for a master's degree in public health, and played for Tufts' women's rugby team. Today she is a research assistant at the John Hancock Research Center.

"When I first trained to become a fitness trainer, I knew this was my calling. I went from working solely with individual clients to teaching fitness classes, participating in club athletics, instructing staff and faculty lifting programs, and training our athletic teams. With each step I became stronger, more confident, and much more definite that I'd found what I wanted to do with my life.

"Athletics at Tufts has helped me to define my personal and lifetime goals and given me the confidence I need to achieve them."



Growing up amid violent civil war in northern Uganda, Teddy Atim, N08, knows firsthand the complexities—and the horrors—of humanitarian crisis. And she's determined to help her nation along the road to peace.

"It's going to take a lot of hard work to heal my country," says Atim. As a recent graduate of the master's in humanitarian assistance program at the Feinstein International Center, a part of the Friedman School, she has gained the skills to do it.

The Feinstein International Center trains researchers and professionals, like Atim, who work all over the world having real, immediate impact on the victims of war, famine or natural disaster. "Teddy has returned to Uganda and she is a real agent for change," says Feinstein Center Director Dr. Peter Walker, a foremost authority in the field of humanitarian assistance and four-time Boston Marathon runner with the PMC. "Teddy is now leading a major research program for us in Uganda and working to strengthen local community action groups."

Case Study



When it comes to good nutrition and a healthy lifestyle, these Friedman School students, faculty, and alumni do more than talk the talk or walk the walk. They run the run. As members of Tufts' President's Marathon Challenge (PMC) team, they train hundreds of miles a year, rain or shine, for the annual Boston Marathon. They were among nearly 200 PMC runners from across the university who made the 26.2-mile trek from Hopkinton to Boston on April 20, 2009, raising more than \$422,000 for fitness and nutrition research at Tufts.

"There is no better feeling than a runner's high!" says Juli Huddleston, N10, who ran her first Boston Marathon in 2009 in 3 hours, 29 minutes and 30 seconds. "I have been promoting how great an experience the President's Marathon Challenge is to anyone who will listen. Having a goal and a team to work with increases the likelihood that an individual will start and continue a normal exercise routine—and furthermore, that they will enjoy it!"

PMC teammate Keith Lividini, N10, a dual M.S./M.P.H. graduate who studied nutritional epidemiology and public health, finished his first Boston Marathon in 3 hours, 16 minutes and 7 seconds. "It really is a lot of fun," he said. "You meet great people, become part of a team, and get to perform in front of thousands of people cheering you on. In addition, you get a chance to be coached by a truly amazing person in Coach Don Megerle."

Another first-time marathoner was Rebecca Boulos, N10, USDA Doctoral Fellow in Obesity at the Friedman School's John Hancock Research Center, who finished in 4 hours, 37 minutes and 8 seconds. "Running with the PMC has been such a fantastic, wonderful, and rewarding experience," she said. "It's difficult to describe, but the running is almost secondary. The program, of course, is about pushing ourselves physically; but perhaps more importantly, it's about building community. I feel so fortunate to have had this experience and am sincerely grateful to everyone who makes it possible."

"I have never even dreamed of running a marathon. The highlight was seeing my two sons, my husband, and my parents at Mile 22 with big smiles, cheering me up. The following day my youngest son announced to the entire nursery school that Mommy won the marathon and won a medal!"

—Silvina Furlong Choumenkovitch, NG01, researcher, Children in Balance, John Hancock Research Center on Physical Activity, Nutrition and Obesity Prevention, Tufts Friedman School, who finished her first Boston Marathon in 2009.

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