

## Reflections on My Boston Marathon Run...

Yesterday at the 114th running of the Boston Marathon I arrived in Hopkinton at about 6:45 a.m. Being early, I found a bench to sit, reflect, and watch all the activity around me. As I waited a “Dad” asked to share my bench with me. We chatted about his two sons and his wife who runs a home daycare. It was clear he worked hard for his family and was running for them. After moving to sit in the sun under a tree, I met another man and he told me how he raised money for Homeless Shelters, and I realized we are all working together.

The moment came when the runners gathered in the corrals; all 26,000+ of us, and the race began. With each step I found one of my families in my mind. As the first mile passed, I thought - I can do this for 25 more miles. As I ran I watched the people on the sides of the road and again was reminded of how important our family support work is to others. I saw the “Dad” with his two small children holding them up and my heart was full. I saw the multi-generations of families celebrating together and the gratitude for all those able to be together. I saw the “Mothers” with small children wishing they were running too, but knowing they were doing what their children needed, and it reminded me of the sacrifices we make as parents.

I looked up at one point and saw my work partner Monica on the sidelines and felt so loved by her continuous support and her journey that has taught me so much. Thanks for the hug Monica; it’s good to know we are not alone in this work. Upon entering Natick and my soul was full as all of my family stood and held me and I was so grateful for them allowing me to share them with so many.

I began to struggle as I was running into Newton and once I hit the 17 mile mark, I was in trouble. My head felt dizzy and felt I might be sick. Upon reaching the top of yet one more hill, I saw a porta-potty and was instantly reminded of the humor we need to do this very hard work of parenting. How embarrassing this will be to ask a stranger assist me in getting out of the potty. It was not a pretty thought but it did make me giggle to myself. I finally exited my little “rest spot” and as legs struggled, luckily across the street was a medical tent. A young man greeted me and asked if I was okay and I replied that “I’m having trouble.” How many times have I had that experience in meeting families along the way? He offered me a place to rest and a “warm blanket,” a symbol of what we at Cape

Cod Children’s Place are to so many families. He stayed with me and asked what else he could do for me. I asked to use his phone and called my husband and told him “I need you, I’m not doing okay.” It wasn’t the first time he told me “It’s okay, Hon, I will be right there.” It’s a blessing to know that kind of love. My “new friend” supported me as I stood and offered another “warm blanket.” Imagine the sight; I looked like a silver bullet walking the streets of Newton. I walked and found my husband. He nourished me with popsicles and put me into a very hot shower. Then I sipped chicken broth and replenished the important sodium my body needed. We then began the long journey home. I shared with my husband my disappointment of not finishing. He shared his fears that I was going to hurt myself and not be able to do one of the things that I love so much - run.

Today I woke I felt a little sore, and really began to think about yesterday. I knew I’d finish that marathon but not on anyone else’s schedule. So today holding all those families in my heart, I ran 4.5 miles and it felt good. Upon reflection, my marathon run is like the work we do parenting and working with families. Even when our hearts are fully in it, we sometimes come to the place of struggle and need support. Sometimes we are able to find it within our own families and friends and sometimes we need to go outside to our community and agencies for help.

Thank you all who have supported me and believe in the work that we all do. Whether we are the “warm blanket” along the way, or the words of encouragement, or cup of chicken broth that replenishes what we have lost, I pray we continue to do this work and believe in every family that journeys among us. **Thank You!**

*P.S. For the record your body is different at 50 than at 38!*



**Healthy Families = Strong Communities**