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Every runner on Team 261 Fearless in this year's Boston Marathon has a story about the determination and fearlessness that propels them toward the start line on April 16. Here are four of them.

## **Demi Clark**

Fort Mill, South Carolina

In 2013, Demi—running for Dream Big, which empowers girls through sports and physical activities—was just a few yards from the Boston Marathon finish line when the first bomb went off. Although battling PTSD, she returned to run in 2014; still waking up a few times a week in distress, she will nonetheless be on the start line again this year, on the fifth anniversary of the tragedy. Why return again? “We have such potential to make positive change together through 261 Fearless, and a “movement” of women who are already empowered by running,” said Demi. “I have two daughters, and I see the news every day. We’re in an era where women are learning their power, and we finally have a voice and a platform. There is so much work to be done for us, and for the next generation, in terms of empowerment. I was lucky to grow up with some trailblazing women in my family, like my grandmother—who was one of the first female Marines in WWII. I’m inspired to be the same for the next generation of women.”

## **Caroline Keating**

Cincinnati, Ohio

When they were growing up, Caroline’s father always made sure that she and her sister had the same opportunities as their brothers, especially when it came to sports. About 10 years ago, Bill Keating chaired a committee to retroactively award varsity letters to women at the University of Cincinnati and Xavier University who competed in sports prior to Title IX. Caroline ran her first marathon, in 2008, with her father, who immediately challenged her to qualify for Boston. In August 2016, Bill was diagnosed with brain cancer, and a few weeks later Caroline was devastated when she again fell short of a qualifier. She vowed to qualify the next year at their hometown race, with him there cheering her on. But five weeks before the race, Bill passed away. On May 7, 2017, Caroline ran the Flying Pig Marathon and crossed the finish line in 3:32:53 – qualifying for Boston by more than two minutes. “Boston was something I wanted to do for my dad, and I can’t think of a better way to honor him than to continue his pursuit of woman’s sports,” says Caroline. “The fact that I get to run this historical race while empowering other female runners is truly a blessing.”

## **Lori Riggles**

Ramer, Alabama

While in the early stages of training for the 2016 TCS New York City Marathon, Lori was hit by a truck. In a coma for five days, she awoke to a head injury along with broken bones in her back, wrist, and pelvis. Despite being unable to even walk seven months before the race, and facing months of physical, occupational and cognitive therapy, she still vowed to run New York that year—and did, finishing in a remarkable 5:37:54. Then last year, she ran the Boston Marathon on the first anniversary of the accident. Lori, who has admired Kathrine Switzer since childhood, is running with 261 Fearless as an inspiration to her students, to illustrate the importance of



setting seemingly impossible goals and then attaining them through “work ethic, perseverance, and never giving up. I want to run to encourage my students to be fearless no matter what obstacles they face.”

## **Molly Sheridan**

Reno, Nevada

Molly didn't begin running until she was 50, but almost immediately stepped out of her comfort zone to run Marathon des Sables, 150 miles across the Sahara Desert. “I realized that when you choose to tap into your mental strength, consistently train and focus on persistence you become fearless and there is nothing that you can't accomplish,” she said. Molly is the first American woman to run in the La Ultra—The High, 138 miles nonstop in the Himalayas, which includes two mountain passes at 18,000 feet and took her 58 hours. She has competed in more than 70 ultramarathons around the world, including the Badwater Ultramarathon, 135 miles nonstop from Death Valley to Mt. Whitney. “Running 261 Boston represents everything I have worked for over the last 10 years, which is empowering women to walk and run for health and adventure,” said Molly, who launched an adventure race-management company after she discovered running.

If you're interested in speaking with any of these women, please contact Barbara Huebner at [barbarajhuebner@gmail.com](mailto:barbarajhuebner@gmail.com), for 261 Fearless.