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Happy - yes, *happy* - New Year!



Dear friends,

What a difference a year makes. These trying times continue, lasting far longer than any of us expected and redefining how we interact with one another – or don't. So, once again, a heartfelt wish: I sincerely hope this finds you and your family safe and healthy.

But – just for fun – what if, when I sat down to write this, I changed the punctuation mark in that first sentence? It would read, 'What a difference a year makes!'

A whole new message, right? Something to celebrate, not lament.

I'm no Pollyanna, and I won't ignore the daunting challenges behind and ahead, but allow me to recognize some modest successes – causes for joy – and some people to thank. That, at any rate, is how we here at the 26.2 Foundation would choose to look at 2020.

Full Speed Ahead on the IMC

In December, Hopkinton's Select Board approved the 99-year lease of a 19-acre site on the Boston Marathon route, where the Foundation plans to build the International Marathon Center. Just half a mile from the Marathon starting line, the Center will include world-class education and conference facilities, an interactive marathon museum, hall of fame, auditorium, event space and research facilities.



A few steps remain before we secure the final permit that allows us to break ground, but never has our vision felt so near to hand. Just this week we contracted with [HealyKohler Design](#) of Washington, D.C. to master-plan the exhibit space. Foundation advisory council member Doug Stark, museum director of the [International Tennis Hall of Fame](#) in Newport, RI, is helping to guide us through the plan – a plan that will effectively serve as the Center's heartbeat.

Next Step: A Capital Campaign

These advances bring us face-to-face with our next major initiative: raising money. We have always planned for the IMC to be privately funded by individual donors, foundations and corporations, but the cost is not insignificant: \$20+ million.



To get there, we're now mapping out a capital campaign, recruiting a campaign chair, establishing a campaign committee, and building a compelling case for philanthropy. Our thanks to two new friends of the Foundation who are helping us with this: professional development officer Marcia Brown of Bristol, RI, and Clark University student John D'Eufemia.

Team Inspire – Aptly Named

One of our proudest achievements in 2020 was the dramatic growth – from 15 to 65 members – of Team Inspire, those marathoners who run and fundraise for the Foundation in return for an invitational entry. For that we thank the [Boston Athletic Association](#), who allocated the bibs, and Susan Hurley of [Charity Teams](#), who managed the Foundation's application process.



Collectively, Team Inspire raised \$576K in 2020 to support our initiatives and enable our work on the IMC to truly accelerate. Gracious and understanding despite the disappointment of a cancelled race, they rallied around the B.A.A.'s Boston Marathon Virtual Experience, with no fewer than 38 of them participating. Their personal stories are compelling and inspiring – read Nicole Thomas's [here](#), or Courtney Olton's [here](#), or others' on the 'Team Inspire' and 'Newsletter' pages of www.26-2.org. Thank you, team!



The Girl Who Ran

Years in the planning and making, the sculpture of marathon trailblazer Bobbi Gibb, the first woman to run Boston, is finished. Sculpted by Bobbi herself and cast by Buccacio Sculpture Services in Canton, MA, the statue commemorates, in Bobbi's words, "...all the powerful women who have run Boston since 1966."

Thank you, Bobbi, and everyone whose support has made this possible. We plan to unveil the sculpture, 'The Girl Who Ran' – named after her children's book about running (*see illustration*) – this April in Hopkinton, MA, conditions permitting. It will reside there permanently on the Boston Marathon race course. Read more about the project [here](#).

"It's been a challenging year, but not without its accomplishments," said Foundation chairman Michael Neece recently, adding, "Here's to 2021 – may it be brighter and safer, and fulfill the hopes and promises we have for it."

Sincerely,

Tim Kilduff,
President



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