



2024 BOSTON MARATHON PURSUIT PROGRAM

FOR CURRENT HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS

Application Deadline March 8, 2024 11:59pm (MST)

*"Our young people must have a dream and hope. Running is a means of healing."
-Billy Mills*

Background:

At the 2016 Boston Marathon, the Boston Athletic Association (B.A.A.), Harvard University Native American Program (H.U.N.A.P.), Running Strong for American Indian Youth, The Indigenous Marathon Foundation and Wings of America partnered to celebrate past Native American and First Nations Boston Marathon champions. Through a series of speaking presentations, panel discussions and receptions hosted by Harvard and the B.A.A., the legacy of legendary runners like Ellison "Tarzan" Brown (Narragansett), Tom Longboat (Onondaga), Andrew Sockalexis (Penobscot), Billy Mills (Oglala Lakota), Arnulfo Quimare (Raramuri) and Patti Dillon (Mi'kmaq) came to life. A select few adult runners also got the opportunity to raise money and awareness for Indian organizations by training for and racing the Marathon.

Wings of America has continued this partnership with the B.A.A. and Boston area Universities to use "Marathon Weekend" as an opportunity for learning, conversation, relationship building and healing. **For a sixth year, Wings will select up to 5 high school juniors to travel with the organization and experience the Boston Marathon as part of our "Pursuit" Program April 11th-16th, 2024.**

This year, two "charity runners" have volunteered to raise funds to pay for the Pursuit students' trip and serve as trip chaperones: Justin Casiquito (Jemez Pueblo), and Andrea Snowball (Muscogee Nation and Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska). Justin is a runner, father, and land-based learning educator at Albuquerque's Native American Community Academy. Andrea, or "Andy", is a runner, mother, and Associate Attorney for Big Fire Law and Policy Group, LLP. Along with Wings staff, they will accompany students during the weekend's activities and share lodging at the home of a host family in the Boston suburb of Chestnut Hill.

Trip itinerary will include:

- College visits/counseling facilitated by Boston-area Universities.
- Group runs in and around Boston as a means of sightseeing.
- Speaking engagements, tours and workshops that expose students to the realities of continuing their education.
- Visits to the Boston Marathon “expo” and other race-related events/speakers leading up to the race.
- The B.A.A. 5K hosted on the Boston Common the Saturday before the Marathon.
- Museum and research institution visits in the Boston area.
- Marathon viewing on “Patriot’s Day”.

Application:

ALL applicants must meet the following criteria to apply for the Pursuit Program:

1. Be a current High School Junior.
2. Have a cumulative high school grade point average of at least 3.0.
3. Be able to provide proof of membership in a federally or state-recognized Tribe or Alaska Native Corporation in the United States.
4. Be able to provide proof that you have taken or are currently signed up to take either the ACT or SAT.
5. Submit two (2) letters of recommendation from teachers, coaches, mentors and/or bosses who are not related to you.
6. Submit **typed** responses to the following essay questions by Friday, March 8th, 2024, at 11:59pm (MST).

Essay Questions:

1. Briefly explain the role running has played in your life thus far and how you envision the activity being a part of your practice as you grow older. (300-350 words)
2. Why do you want to attend college? What challenges must you overcome to achieve this goal? How might a trip to Boston with Wings this April help you overcome these challenges? (350-500 words)
3. At the end of this application are 5 short biographies of notable Native and First Nations champions of the Boston Marathon from the early 1900’s to present-day. Read these histories and then choose one runner to do additional research on using the Internet. Explain in your own words why this runner is particularly inspirational to you. How has their running created visibility for their Tribe or community in the greater world? Finally, how can you as a Pursuit student honor their legacy if you are chosen to travel to Boston? (350-500 words)

Application Material Checklist:

- ___ Essay question responses
- ___ High School Transcript
- ___ ACT or SAT registration confirmation
- ___ Copy of proof of Tribal enrollment
- ___ Signed letters of recommendation (2) (sealed or unsealed)
- ___ Completed Applicant Information Questionnaire (see below)

Ways to Submit:

1. (Up to March 8th 11:59pm MST deadline) Email all materials as a single pdf to:
mariah@wingsofamerica.org
2. (On or before March 4th) Mail all materials to:

**Wings of America
Attn: Mariah Gachupin
13701 Skyline Rd. NE
Albuquerque, NM 87123**

**Applicant Information Questionnaire
(To be submitted with application other application materials):**

Full Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

School You Attend: _____

Home Mailing
Address: _____

Best Phone Number to Reach You (Student): _____

Your Email (Student): _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Phone Number: _____

Parent/Guardian Email: _____

**Please call or text Mariah at (505) 521 9799 with questions about the
application process and/or submission**



Tom Longboat (Onondaga):

Tom Longboat is part of a long line of Onondaga runners from Six Nations, Canada. Sadly, it is said that some of his first distance runs were to escape residential school, rather than to run messages for his Tribe. After his talent for running was recognized, he was coached by Bill Davis (Mohawk), who finished 2nd in the Boston Marathon in 1901. By 1907, Longboat bettered his coach and won the race over the old 24.5-mile course in 2:24:24. His time was nearly 5 minutes faster than any previous winner at Boston.

Longboat competed in the 1908 Olympic marathon in London. But like many others, he collapsed in the brutal heat and didn't finish the race. However, a "rematch" was put on the following year in Madison Square Garden. Tom beat out Dorando Pietri and Alfred Shrubbs to become "Professional Champion of the World".

Longboat's running career came to an abrupt halt at the outbreak of WWI. He served as a "dispatch runner" in the Canadian Expeditionary Force. While on the frontlines, he was presumed dead twice for long periods of time. Worse yet, he also had his identity stolen by an unscrupulous vaudeville singer looking to take advantage of the celebrity attached to his name.

Longboat ceased to run professionally after returning from war. But his impressive accomplishments were never forgotten. In 2008, June 4th was officially declared "Tom Longboat Day" in Ontario, Canada with the passage of Bill 120.

Andrew Sockalexis (Penobscot):

A member of the Penobscot Tribe from Indian Island, ME, Andrew Sockalexis began training for distance races at a very young age. It is said that his father built him a “track” around his house and that he would frequently run loops around the island he grew up on. He was only 19 years old when he debuted at the Boston Marathon and claimed 17th place. The next two years, 1912 and 1913, he was runner-up.

In 1912, Sockalexis represented the United States at the Games of the V Olympiad in Stockholm, Sweden. He was not the only Native athlete on “Team USA”. Both Jim Thorpe (Sac & Fox) and Louis Tewanima (Hopi) claimed medals in their respective events. Sockalexis came on strong at the end of the marathon on a brutally hot day to claim 4th place.

At the end of 1913, Sockalexis “turned pro”. At the time, this disqualified him from running Boston again. In 1916, at the end of a 15-mile race from Old Town to Bangor, ME, Andrew began to cough up blood and collapsed. Soon after, he was diagnosed with Tuberculosis. He met his Creator on August 26, 1919. He was only 27 years old.





Ellison Meyer Brown (Narragansett):

Ellison “Tarzan” Meyer Brown (b. 1914) was the sixth of eight children in a proud Narragansett family. His tribal moniker was “Deerfoot”, and he began to live up to the name as a young boy. It is said that as a twelve-year-old, Tarzan tagged along barefoot on a twenty-mile training run with Chief “Bunk” Stanton, an older marathoner from his community. When Stanton’s manager, Tippy Salimeno, saw Ellison finish just a few minutes behind, he was convinced that the young runner had exceptional talent and vowed to represent him when he turned 16.

Tarzan ran his first Boston Marathon in 1935 at the age 20. He finished 13th running the last five miles of the race barefoot after the discomfort of his shoes became unbearable. His mother died only two days earlier- but her dying wish to her son was that he race.

In 1936, Ellison returned to the starting line in Hopkinton better prepared. After nearly 20 miles of Tarzan leading the race, the previous year’s winner, John Kelley, caught up and gave the “new kid” a patronizing pat on the rear as he went by. Ellison waited for the last of the Newton hills to regain the lead. “He ran like a bat out of hell,” *The Boston Globe* reported, and broke Kelley’s spirit so effectively that the section of the course is known as “heartbreak hill” to this day. Brown won in 2 hours, 33 minutes, 40 seconds. Three years later, in his second win, he was the first ever Boston competitor to break 2:30 over the 26.2 mile distance with a time of 2:28:51.

Tarzan was the favorite of the three runners chosen to represent the USA at the Berlin Olympics in 1936. Unfortunately, he was disqualified for “receiving aid” after suffering a severe leg cramp somewhere around mile 19. There is also some speculation that a run-in with Hitler’s “brown shirts” in the days leading up to the marathon may have contributed to his disqualification.

Tarzan continued to race across “New England” until 1946. More often than not, he ran to support his family- not for bragging rights. Sometimes he would even “choose” his finishing place. When the prizes offered for 2nd or 3rd were more valuable to a prospective buyer than the winner’s trophy, who could blame him?

Patti Dillon (Mi'kmaq):

Born and raised in Quincy, MA as the eldest of nine children, this legendary competitor didn't know a thing about distance running until she began her "be nice to Patti" campaign in the spring of 1976. As a young nurse's aide working long shifts for peanuts, running became her way of creating joy in life and proving her self-worth. After learning that endurance must be built gradually, she quickly began to distinguish herself in races across the northeast and around the world. In 1979, she placed second in the Boston Marathon. Much to her frustration, she repeated this feat for the next two years.

Outside of Boston, Patti was the first [Native] American woman to break 2:30 in the marathon (1980 NYC). She won the Honolulu marathon four years in a row ('78-'81) and set world bests at the half marathon, 20km and 30km distances. She held American records on the roads at every distance from the marathon down to 5-miles. She was also the first female athlete to sign a professional running contract with Nike.

Today, Patti coach's runners of many different backgrounds and is available for motivational speaking engagements. She lives in Connecticut with her husband, Dan Dillon, and a small pack of golden retrievers. She also serves as a board member of Wings of America, a not-for-profit that creates opportunities for Native American youth through the sport of running. She was the official starter of the elite men's and women's races in Hopkinton on Indigenous People's Day (10/11/21).



Jordan Brings Three White Horses Marie-Daniel (Kul Wicasa Lakota or Lower Brule Sioux Tribe):

As a former collegiate runner and tireless advocate for a wide variety of Native and Indigenous issues across Turtle Island, Jordan was an obvious choice to be a “charity” runner and chaperone for Wings’ 2019 “Pursuit Program” students. Indeed she served admirably in this role in every way.

However, Jordan’s participation became even more meaningful when she dedicated each mile of her race to a Missing and/or Murdered Indigenous Woman. With a red handprint on her face and the letters “MMIW” written on her body, Jordan unapologetically used one of the biggest races in the world to create visibility for victims of an epidemic that are too often ignored and forgotten. Not only did the media pay attention and amplify her message- but Jordan also inspired thousands of youth (and adults) around Indian Country to begin speaking up on the issue in their own communities.

Although Jordan will certainly run many more marathons, she is included on this mural because her bravery and activism mark the start of what we hope to be a monumental shift in the running community. If we can continue to encourage each other to run for more than ourselves, we will most certainly be better as individuals and a community.

If you would like to learn more about the issue of Missing, Murdered, and Stolen Indigenous Relatives, or further support Jordan’s work, please visit risinghearts.org

