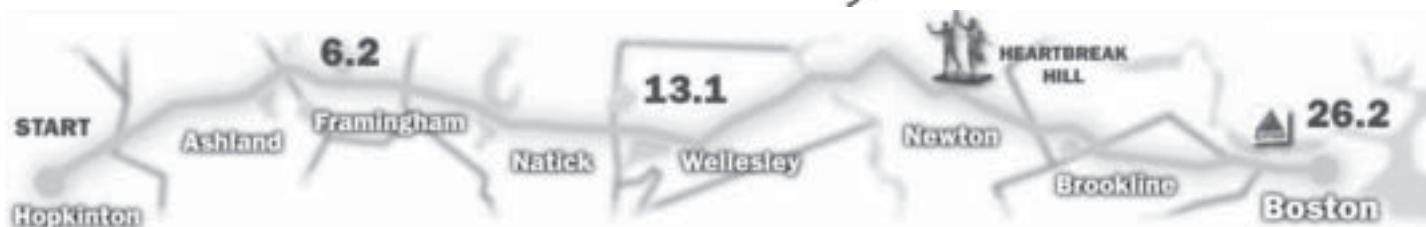


## 1998 BOSTON MARATHON®



## JIMMY FUND WALK



Brian M. Richards  
Wellesley to Copley Square  
September 27, 1998

There is no mistaking a PMC (Pan Massachusetts Challenge) event from the BMJFW (Boston Marathon® Jimmy Fund Walk), as it was night and day. The PMC is a high keyed event starting with the Pasta Dinner the night before the Ride. Over 1,000 people attend the PMC Pasta dinner at the Sturbridge Host, where one has a choice of over ten different types of pastas, cheese, shrimp, beer, wine coolers, and various types of salads. The PMC even provides on the day of the Ride breakfast for the Riders. Food is plentiful on a PMC event. The BMJFW is a very low keyed event, very boring. The pasta dinner is held at Wellesley High School cafeteria, where one has one type of pasta, and one type of salad. Soda was plentiful as long as it was Stop & Shop brand. We did have three types of cake to eat, and coffee to wash it down. There were probably 30 people at Wellesley High School when I showed up at the pasta dinner. I met Emily Swymer, the Senior Program Officer of the event, and commented on the difference between the PMC and the BMJFW. The PMC was founded by Billy Starr, and he is the main person that everyone knows about the PMC. Emily told me that the BMJFW runs their event different than the PMC, and prefers it



that way. I am sure if Emily was a betting person she would have bet my not finishing the Walk.



There is a major difference in fund raising events between the PMC and the BMJFW that a person has to raise. In 1998, the PMC has a \$100 fee to get into the event versus the BMJFW \$10 fee. The minimum to raise for the PMC is \$550 for a one day rider, and \$1,100 for a two day rider. The BMJFW has a minimum of \$100 to raise for the event, money in advance. To become a member of the 27 Mile Club for the BMJFW one had to raise a minimum of \$500,



everyone else had a white bib. The 27 Mile Club members had their name announced as they crossed the finish line.

The official time to leave at Wellesley High School is 11:00 AM. I left at 9:45 AM as I thought I was going to be slow on the Walk. My total walking time was 3 hours and 37 minutes, which meant I was walking at a 17.79 minute per mile pace. (3.37MPH). My fellow walkers and I quickly realized that

which I can say I am a member. With your help, I raised \$1,242.00 for the PMC and \$1250.00 for the BMJFW, bringing my 11 year total for the Jimmy Fund to \$37374.80 The BMJFW has raised over \$9.7 million since 1989, and raised \$2 million in 1997. The BMJFW goal in 1998 is to raise \$2.2 million for Dana Farber, which I am sure they will do it.

the start point at Wellesley High School was at the 14 mile point, not the 13.1 mile point as we passed the

Since I started at the 13.1 mile point at Wellesley High School on the day of the Walk I had to drop my car off at the Woodland MBTA "T" stop, three miles from the start point at Wellesley High School. The BMJFW had a shuttle bus to get you from the "T" stop to Wellesley High School.



There were over 6,000 walkers who showed up for the event. There were three starting points to do the Walk. The full 26.2 mile Walk started at Hopkinton. The 13.1 mile Walk started at Wellesley. The three mile walk started at Dana Farber. We all ended at the

marker that said we were at mile 15, as we were expecting to see mile marker 14. The first couple of miles were relatively flat or going down hill. I noticed that there no spectators along the route cheering you on, except for the last 100 feet crossing the finish line. It was are own people at our refueling stations that



finish line at Copley Square. All the walkers had bibs. A bib is what a runner wears to identify the runner. The 27 Mile Club members had an orange bib, while

provided our much needed morale boost. The first refueling station that I arrived at was at the 16 mile point. I was amazed at how small it was, just a few tables that had water, soda, and some food. The only real complaint I had that the water was served in Dixie cups. I had to grab 10 of them to get enough water to drink. The PMC is a flamboyant event, with huge water stops, plentiful food and spectators. It does add to expenses. The PMC can get away with that because of the \$100 fee that all riders are charged, whether it is a one day or two day rider. Although most of the services are provided free to the PMC, they do spend for other products that are not donated. The BMJFW is totally dependent on donations, which I am able to proudly say the BMJFW gives 100% of the money

raised to Dana Farber, versus 90% the PMC gives to the cause. The \$10 fee the BMJFW charges covers the expense of the T-shirt and fanny pack.. The rest of the expenses are covered by corporate sponsors.

My fellow walkers and I were commenting as we passed the Woodland MBTA "T" stop that now was the time to walk to our cars and leave as the hills were beginning to start. I was amazed at some people who were either jogging or running the course. Most of the walking took place on sidewalks or at the edge of the road. It was nice to talk with various walkers along the course. One of the comments that made my fellow walkers' smile was the one I made about my shoulder accident. I told them "I was planning to do the PMC bicycle ride this year when I shattered my left shoulder in four places, requiring an artificial one be put in. I asked God what am I suppose to do, and God told me to take a hike. So here I am walking." There were over 6,000 reasons why people were doing the Walk. We in are own way making a silent statement against cancer. I talked with one lady who signed up the week before the Walk, and she told me she just buried her husband two weeks ago to cancer and wanted to make it her personal reason for doing it. When I was asked why I was walking I told them that in 1988 I did the PMC as a one time event in honor of my father, and 10 years and my eleventh event I am still doing it in his memory.

There are two major events in my life that makes me keep raising money for cancer research. I decided to do the 1988 PMC Ride as a one time event. I got more emotional as the event got closer. I saw in my humble opinion the strongest man in the world being cut down



by cancer. My dad was so strong he was able to empty a 55 gallon trash can that three Lawrence Massachusetts garbage men could not pick up in the late 1950<sup>ies</sup>. My dad was at an auto show in Boston in the early part of the 1960<sup>ies</sup> where he lifted the front end of a Volkswagen Beetle to see what it looked like. Mom was still giving him hell when they got home from the show. I was being torn apart inside to see someone so strong, and now could barely get out of his bed to walk to his favorite chair. The 1988 Ride will go down as one of my most enjoyable event of my adult life and changed me forever in a way I cannot explain. My mind then went back to the spring of 1959 when my father dropped by St. Patrick's Grammar School with my mother in his grand new 1959 Ford Galaxie Fairlane car. It was a blue and white four door sedan. The reason for the occasion was due to the fact that my mother came home from cancer surgery. I was tapped on the shoulder and went out of the recess line to walk to the car. My older sister Lillian made it to the car, but the one thing that stuck in my mind was seeing my younger sister Carol in the middle of the school yard running as hard as she could, arms running up and down her side, crying at the top of her lungs as she wanted to see mommy. We talked briefly in the car and went back to school. I was torn apart emotionally in 1991. It was five weeks before the Ride when I got word that my sister Carol came down with the same cancer my mother had in 1959. She was pregnant with her first child. I am happy to say that she is in remission and her son Jon turns seven this October 27.



The hills seemed as they never go away. Miles 20 through 22 were the roughest ones I experienced. I had to urinate at the refueling station at mile 22, where I realized I was dehydrating. My urine was



The lower parts of the back of my legs were cramping up, making it very painful to keep walking that last mile, but I was determined to finish it. There were a crowd of spectators within 100 feet of the finish line cheering the walkers. Even an over weight over the hill guy like myself felt like Bill Rodgers for one day out of the year. As I crossed the finish line I heard the announcer say "Number 1,073, Brian Richards from Pennsville New Jersey. Another example of someone going out of his way to help a child beat cancer." I received my medallion and started walking out of the winner circle where Emily saw me. She congratulated my accomplishment and asked if I was doing the Walk next year. I smiled as said yes, the full 26.2 miles.

In closing, you are probably wondering why someone with a broken shoulder would want to torture his body

a very deep color of green and purple. It was the hottest day in late September that New England has ever experienced, 88 degrees. I told my fellow walkers to blame me as I brought the weather up from New Jersey. I decided to rest for 15 minutes and drink plenty of fluids. The station had 12 ounce cups, making it easier to drink water, and they had eight ounce packs of fruit juices to grab. Just before I left the disk jockey was playing the disco version of December 1963 (O What a Night) by the Four Seasons, my favorite signing group. I went to one volunteer and said the two best things that came out of New Jersey are the Four Seasons and I. I was on my way to finish the last four miles.



on a half marathon walk just to raise money for the Jimmy Fund. My grandmother, whom I never met, died of cancer at 48. My mother died at 40. My father's 40 month battle with colon cancer came to an end on September 10, 1988. I am going to keep raising money for cancer research until I cannot get the sponsors or the Good Lord tells me to put down my walking shoes. I hope you will consider sponsoring me next year so I can walk for the Jimmy Fund. It is in my father's name, Joseph Albert Richards, a 1988 Pan Massachusetts Challenge Jimmy Fund sponsor, that I hereby dedicate my walk to. "I miss you daddy." Until next year.

Brian M. Richards

I was starting to feel the effects of the walk. My left shoulder was hurting because of the back pack I was wearing, so I used my left thumb to lift up on the left strap. The last few miles were either flat or going down hill. I smiled when I got to mile 25 as I saw the famous Citgo sign in front of me and Fenway Park on my right. I caught up with some people who started at the three mile point. This was mainly a family walking event, with parents and small children. The same rules applied to them as with all the other walkers, a \$10 fee and a minimum of \$100 to raise. The children had their own BMJFW T-shirt to wear, and all walkers who crossed the finish line received a medallion, including the children.



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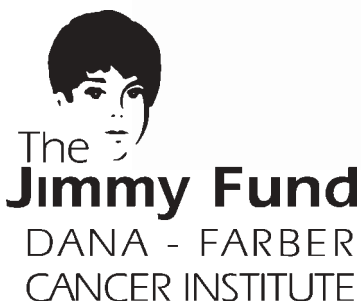


JIMMY FUND WALK

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SINCE 1998



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*Mom & Dad would be proud. Until next year.  
Thank you and May God Bless.*

*Brian M. Richards*