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# **LA Marathon: Recovering Addicts Raise \$200,756 for Beit T'Shuvah**

## ***Empowered and Recovering After Running For Recovery***

Los Angeles, CA- 50 recovering addicts, 15 of whom are still in treatment at Beit T'Shuvah laced up and did it. As team Running4Recovery they powered past the finish line at the LA Marathon after months of training. Each one of them ended their 26 mile run in an emotional tear filled embrace. It was a moment of realization, that if they could finish this, they could finish their commitment to a healthier drug free life. "Now I'm convinced, the unimaginable is possible," said recent program graduate Eric Miller.

Ryan Ramsey is still a resident at Beit T'Shuvah. His commitment to recover from drug addiction was a struggle, but committing to this marathon strengthened his resolve. He went from being the slowest resident on the Running4Recovery team, to the first to cross the finish line in four hours and 23 minutes. "Six months ago I could barely run two miles and the thought of running 26 miles was pretty ridiculous," said Ramsey. "I just set new goals to increase the mileage every week. This experience shows me that I can do anything with hard work and dedication."

Aryeh Robbins, also in treatment, pushed his way through the LA Marathon on a fractured foot. He's in pain today, but he embraces that as a reminder of what he just accomplished. "I wouldn't let a little pain get in the way of completing the goal," said Aryeh. "Getting to the finish line in spite of setbacks represents a life struggle for me. It took me longer, but I finished. I feel more powerful and more in control of my life now than ever before."

Justin Kirkgard went into his second year running the LA Marathon with the confidence of having gone through treatment and crossed the finish line last year. This year, he ran to inspire others. "Never give up trying," advises Kirkgard. "As long as there's some part of you that wants to change it's always a possibility." He says he also ran again to give back to the program. "I had no money, they took me off the street and kept me there for 16 months and never charged me a dime."

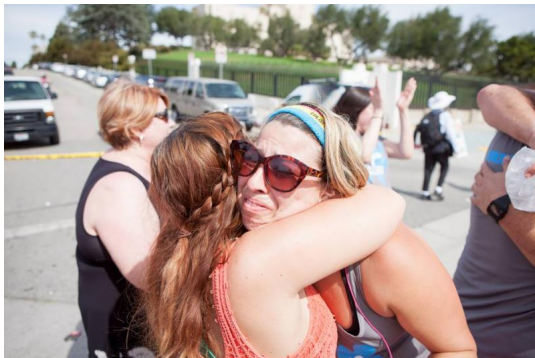
CEO of Beit T'Shuvah, Rabbi Mark Borovitz, has encouraged his residents and supporters to run this marathon since 2010. He never felt he was fit enough to participate. This year, at age 63, he changed his mind and committed. "I just didn't feel I could stand by any longer on the side lines," says Borovitz. "I'm so proud of them, and I just wanted to show them that I was willing to sweat and suffer through it too." While he's not in optimal condition for a run of this magnitude, his effort raised nearly \$36-thousand for the organization. His wife, and Beit T'Shuvah founder, Harriet Rossetto admits she was worried. "I thought maybe he'd keel over so I insisted he walk it!" She

watched him finish with loving pride, "He looked adorable and I was so excited for him after completing such a challenge."

Beit T'Shuvah is hebrew for House of Return. The treatment model is based on returning to a more responsible life in which you take steps toward rectifying the past with actions. For the addicts who completed the race, crossing the finish line was more than one moment. It represented months of little steps toward endurance, commitment, and greater responsibility. "I don't know how long it has been since I committed to something and actually stuck with it," said runner Ryan Ramsey. "Doing this has given me a lot of hope for the future."

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[Please click here to view or download full resolution photos from the marathon and from the block party at mile 19 to cheer on the Running 4 Recovery Team.](#) Photographer credit is Justin Rosenberg.





Harriet Rossetto & Rabbi Mark Borovitz



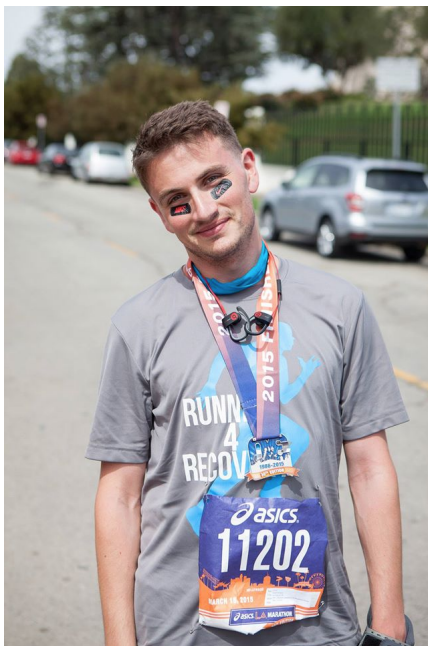
Justin Kirkgard



Rabbi Borovitz & Justin Kirkgard



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