



## Run for Life

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Pizzas are trending toward thinner crusts and half of consumers prefer to go thin. Find out the top 10 habits Americans have when it comes to pizza



# Run for Life

By Maryann Roefaro

*Maryann Roefaro, CEO of Hematology Oncology Associates, tests her endurance at NYC marathon while supporting Hospice of CNY*

On Nov. 6, 2016, the sunrise cast a beautiful light on the Statue of Liberty, illuminating a precious reminder of our freedom while welcoming and warming the hearts of 50,000 runners on Staten Island as they prepared to run the largest marathon in the world — the 2016 TCS New York City Marathon.

More than 1 million spectators that day warmly welcomed runners from all over the world in extraordinary New York fashion.

The cheering, shouting, well wishes, excitement, motivation, crazy costumes, the funny and motivating signs — it was all the craziness that one can expect from this awesome event that lined every inch of the 26.2 miles, with the exception of the bridges that didn't allow for such.

It was a race that included all five boroughs of NYC, starting on Staten Island, running through Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx and ending in Central Park in Manhattan. Pure passion and determination flooded the streets, while people gave it all they had — running 26.2 miles, cascading over five bridges and making 26 turns along the way. It was a spectacular day with perfect weather for running

a marathon through my favorite city in the world!

There were so many reasons for me to be thrilled and grateful to be at this race. Among them is the fact I had spent 20 weeks pushing my training to prepare my 57-year-old body to make it, knowing how much my husband, daughters and even my dog supported me and sacrificed time without me throughout my training.

I was grateful for having special friends who provided motivation and encouragement to instill confidence that I could and would seize the challenge. Most importantly, I was grateful for the 96 individuals that donated to my Hospice of CNY "It's not how you start, it's how you finish" fundraiser.

St. Jude's gifted me space in its charity tent that provided added warmth during my wait if needed after Hospice of CNY provided notification of my fundraising efforts.

I left my hotel for Staten Island at 5 a.m. for a race start of 10:40 a.m. I was given an orange bracelet at the expo that allowed me to enter the charity village where I met two wonderful women who became my best pals for the next four hours.

## Inspirational force

The bracelet, however, on my right wrist served as a symbol for me throughout the race. I looked at it whenever I needed strength or motivation to keep moving. I looked at it when I was in euphoria and when I was in pain. It represented a lot to me — how generous people had been to donate to "Mare's Marathon" and more importantly the journey that individuals make with hospice and the intended use of the funds.

The patients who utilize their services at the end of life and the family members that gather hope, love and courage to walk that final human road with their loved ones are journeys far more difficult and testing of the human spirit than a marathon.

It's hard for me to believe I raised \$11,011 for one of my favorite organizations and group of leaders and employees. Hospice is so precious and needed in our community. The generosity was overwhelming and I'm eternally grateful to all those who donated.

The whole day is one that I will never forget. From start to finish, it offered the gamut of life's emotions for me. Just waiting in my corral to

start and hearing directions in several languages gave me chills.

The beautiful singing of "God Bless America" brought tears to my eyes and I'll never forget how special I felt to be there to hear the roar of the cannon signifying the start of the third wave.

I had made it to the start line and onto the Verrazano Bridge with Frank Sinatra's "New York, New York" blasting — memories burned in my heart and soul forever.

This was my third marathon and all of them have left me with treasured memories. There's nothing like your first and there's nothing like the largest marathon in the world — NYC!

Some ask, "Why run and why a marathon?"

I think George Sheehan, a runner and author, said it best when he said, "The obsession with running is really an obsession with the potential for more and more life."

Why a marathon? "It's the current distance that maximally tests my body, mind and spirit complete with tears of astonishment, accomplishment and joy!" he said.