

**//DARE2TRI**

# THE FIRST WAVE

Fall 2021  
Issue 2



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

**Athlete Spotlight:  
Heather Sealover**

Page 2

**6 Defining Photos of  
Summer 2021**

Pages 4-5

**Race2Raise: Making  
Their Miles Matter**

Page 6

## ATHLETE SPOTLIGHT

# "Charged With New Purpose": Heather Sealover's Story

After sustaining several injuries, Heather Sealover asked her surgeon if she'd be able to run competitively again. For half of her life, she'd been competing in long distance races, from half-marathons and marathons to 50-milers. When the surgeon shook his head, Heather said she "felt a chunk of [her] identity slip away."

Feeling frustrated by her injuries, Heather didn't leave the house for nearly a year and a half, unless she had a medical appointment. Then a friend and mentor told Heather, an Air Force Service Member, about Dare2tri's Injured Military Camp.

Heather was reluctant to sign up, but she ultimately decided to attend. She packed her bags and headed for Hammond, Ind., where she'd spend two days learning the ins and outs of paratriathlon with other wounded veterans. She later called it "the single greatest decision [she] could have made."

At Military Camp, Heather rediscovered her passion for endurance racing. Perhaps most importantly, she learned adaptations for running, utilizing a racing chair.

"Climbing in a racing chair for the first time was scary, but it quickly became the highlight of my experience," Heather recalled. "The feeling kind of resembled riding a bike without training wheels for the first time...freedom!"

After two days of training, Heather and her fellow camp participants competed in Leon's Triathlon, a



HEATHER SEALOVER

race that pays special tribute to active and retired military members.

"Powering around the trail in the racing chair, I felt the closest to running since my femur injury," Heather said. "Furthermore, the connections I made with other military members were paramount."

Heather went on to join Dare2tri for several more events and races during the summer. In July, she finished third overall in the women's Physically Challenged (PC) Open division of the Legacy Triathlon in Long Beach, Calif.

"I had no idea how powerful this experience would be and especially didn't believe there was a way to quench my competitive drive any longer," Heather said. "I feel reinvigorated, alive, and charged with new purpose."



## Dare2tri Athletes, Paralympians Take a 'Victory Lap'

To commemorate the return of multisport racing and the Paralympics Games, we hosted a Victory Lap celebration on Sunday, October 3. The event, held outdoors at Chicago's On Tour Brewing Company, brought together 250 guests to honor 2020 U.S. Paralympians and the achievements of Dare2tri athletes from past and present.

Guests of honor included Paralympic medalists Melissa Stockwell, Hailey Danz, Grace Norman, Ahalya Lettenberger, and Olympic medalist Kevin McDowell. Emcee Victoria Brumfeld (of USA Triathlon) led a group panel discussion covering the impact of Dare2tri, athletics, and the triathlon community. Afterward, guests were asked to "raise their paddles" to help fund the future of Dare2tri programs and initiatives. By the end of the evening, Victory Lap guests raised more than \$200,000 to benefit Dare2tri.

To round out the evening, guests enjoyed a musical performance from a band led by Team Prosthetist Dave Rotter and Medical Director Philip Skiba. Their set included a special appearance by pro trumpeter Evan Taylor, fiancé of Grace Norman. Guests also had the chance to try out a stationary hand cycle at the Beat the Paralympian Station powered by Allbirds. The challenge was to bike faster than gold medalist Kendall Gretsch's 1-mile time. Even Kendall's mom gave it a shot. In the end, no one came close — but everyone had a blast.

Proceeds from Victory Lap benefit Dare2tri programs, resources, equipment, and funding for athletes with physical disabilities and visual impairments. With the future of para athletics not determinant on age, these funds will cultivate even more life-changing opportunities for athletes with disabilities.

## GALLERY

## 6 Defining Photos of Summer 2021



1. Marine Corps Veteran Jataya Taylor takes the podium at Leon's Triathlon with her service dog Kahara. Leon's was Dare2tri's first race as a community after year-long hiatus caused by COVID-19.

2. Train2Race Camp participant Jorge Torres zips down a tree-lined trail during a triple brick workout. He and 25+ Dare2tri athletes later competed in the Pleasant Prairie Triathlon.

3. At Chicago's 63rd Street Beach, Mirielle and her sighted guide Leigh smile as they exit the water. These two cruised to a fast finish during the Kids Camp Tri It Triathlon.



4



4. Athlete John Grimes runs with a prosthetic leg for the first time since amputation, with assistance from Team Prosthetist Dave Rotter and Coach Kelsea Offner.

5. Executive Director Keri Serota celebrates with Paralympic Watch Party guests as Kendall Gretsch sprints to a gold medal finish at the Tokyo Games.

6. Kendall Gretsch and Dan Tun (who served as Kendall's handler) pose after the Paralympic Award Ceremony in Tokyo.

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RACE2RAISE

PHOTO CREDIT: ANDRE WARREN

## Making Their Miles Matter

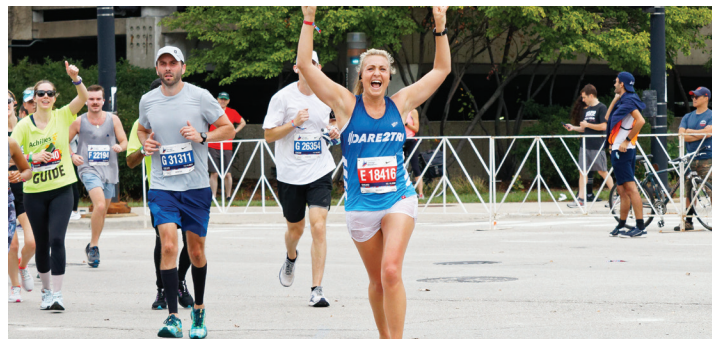
Our Race2Raise Team is a community of athletes, from runners to triathletes, who use their passion for endurance racing to raise awareness for Dare2tri and support athletes with disabilities. Every year, dozens of athletes join the team to add extra meaning to a race of their choice, whether it's the Chicago Triathlon, Chicago Marathon, NYC Marathon, or another event.

In 2021, 30 Race2Raise Team Members raced the Bank of America Chicago Marathon in support of Dare2tri. Together, they raised more than \$90,000 to ensure that our athletes can continue to live healthy, active lives. Every dollar raised goes toward providing programs, prosthetics, adaptive equipment, and race support for athletes in need.

“The journey to the Chicago Marathon meant more to me than anything I have been a part of,” said Anna Hockett, who ran in 2021. “Knowing

that with every step I was doing it for a great cause that means the world to me made every run more meaningful than simply training for a race. Crossing the finish line made the race one of the best days of my life.”

Want to join the team? We are now recruiting runners for the Bank of America Chicago Marathon on October 9, 2022. Team members receive guaranteed entry, Dare2tri gear, and training support from EDGE Athlete Lounge. [Learn more at dare2tri.org.](https://dare2tri.org)



COMING SOON

## Holiday Health Series Set to Return in December

We are excited to once again offer a virtual Holiday Health Series for Dare2tri athletes and volunteers alike. Sponsored by Columbia Threadneedle Investments, this free 3-week program is devoted to best practices for managing mental health and well-being during the holiday season. Sessions will be centered around yoga, breath work, and mindfulness techniques that can help curb stress and anxiety. [Learn more and register at dare2tri.org.](https://dare2tri.org)

### SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT

## Columbia Threadneedle: Supporting Dare2tri Athletes Since 2015

Columbia Threadneedle Investments is an active supporter of triathlon that is firmly committed to supporting triathletes of all ability levels. Helping others reach their goals is core to Columbia Threadneedle's mission. And, while their focus is helping their clients achieve financial success, they believe in strengthening the communities they serve.

As a longtime sponsor of the Dare2tri Elite Team, they back Dare2tri athletes competing in national and international races, helping to offset costs needed to train and compete at the highest level.

Starting in 2017, Columbia Threadneedle began hosting Dare2tri athletes at the Columbia Threadneedle Investments Boston Triathlon, allowing them to review the course and provide feedback to the race organizers on its accessibility.



To this day, Boston Tri continues to accommodate para athletes, making the race a positive and rewarding experience for participants of all abilities.

Last year, Columbia Threadneedle helped Dare2tri launch a virtual Holiday Health Series that provided resources and tips related to mental health, yoga, mindfulness, breathwork and positive-self talk. As noted in the article above, the series will return once again in 2021.

Over the summer, Columbia Threadneedle produced a series of videos featuring several Dare2tri athletes and their success stories. You can watch them and learn more about our partnership at [www.columbiathreadneedleus.com/dare2tri](https://www.columbiathreadneedleus.com/dare2tri)

## PACESETTERS

# A Community of Donors Making an Impact One Month at a Time

Dare2tri Pacesetters are an incredible group of supporters who donate monthly, providing the consistent funding we need to deliver life-changing programs and sustain our impact. We support athletes at every level and ability, ensuring they have access to equipment, training, and a community that supports them — and our Pacesetters help make it possible!



Want to join our community of Pacesetters? Monthly giving is the easiest, most efficient way to support our work and our athletes. You can choose the level of support that fits your budget, and your donation is automatically deducted from your bank account or credit card.

Get started at [www.dare2tri.org/support-us/recurring-giving/](http://www.dare2tri.org/support-us/recurring-giving/)

## EVENT

# Volunteer Appreciation Party: December 9

This holiday season, let's gather together to reflect on our achievements, and celebrate the incredible volunteers who give their time and talent to Dare2tri. Volunteers, athletes, friends, and family are welcome to attend. Food will be provided and beer will be available for purchase.

Date: Thursday, December 9

Time: 6-8 p.m.

Location: Revolution Tap Room

To RSVP, please visit [dare2tri.org](http://dare2tri.org)

