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**Media Contact for MABVI:** David Brown, Chief Advancement Officer, Massachusetts Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (617) 732-0241, [dbrown@mabcommunity.org](mailto:dbrown@mabcommunity.org)

**Massachusetts Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired Honors Joe Walsh of Adaptive Sports of New England with the Kara MacDonald Aspire Award**

BROOKLINE, MA – The Massachusetts Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (MABVI) has announced that Joe Walsh, MS, MEd of Adaptive Sports New England will receive the 2019 Kara MacDonald Aspire Award. The award was created to celebrate the life and work of the late Kara MacDonald, and her dedication to athletes with disabilities. Through her work with the Boston Athletic Association, Kara MacDonald was an early thought leader for, and valuable contributor to, athletes with disabilities, establishing policies and procedures that are in use today. The award will be presented at MABVI's annual pre-marathon dinner for *Team With A Vision*, MABVI's international team of blind, visually impaired, and sighted runners.

Joe Walsh is the President of Adaptive Sports New England, a non-profit organization dedicated to increasing participation in sports among New England youth and young adults who have a visual or mobility impairment. Joe is a two-time Paralympian in cross-country skiing, and former Managing Director of Paralympics for the United States Olympic Committee. He served as Vice President of the International Blind Sports Federation from 2013-2017 and is currently a director of Adaptive Sports USA.

“It is an exceptional honor to receive the Kara MacDonald Aspire Award,” said Walsh. “Kara built a platform on which current Boston sport programs for athletes with disabilities stand, and we are so grateful for her contributions. Some of the youth and young adults served by Adaptive Sports New England participate in B.A.A. programs, and thus benefit directly from Kara's work, though all of our program participants benefit indirectly from her tireless efforts. I personally am inspired by the devotion she brought to her work on behalf of athletes with disabilities.”

“Joe embodies the true spirit of the Kara MacDonald award with his tireless dedication to supporting athletes throughout New England who are visually and mobility impaired,” said Barbara Salisbury, CEO of Massachusetts Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired. “He believes, as we do, that with the proper tools and support, people who are visually impaired can do anything.”

**Massachusetts Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired**

The [Massachusetts Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired](http://www.mabcommunity.org) (MABVI) is the oldest social service organization in the country that serves adults and seniors who are blind or visually impaired. They provide vision rehabilitation services and partner with community and medical groups to create high-impact, cost-effective services.

**Team With A Vision**

TWAV is [an international team of blind, visually impaired, and sighted runners](http://www.teamwithavision.org) committed to race and raise funds for the cause.

MABVI has fielded runners through *Team With A Vision* (TWAV) in the Boston Marathon for 25 years, featuring many world-class visually impaired athletes who are proving that with the right support, people who are visually impaired can do anything they set their minds to. The Team's runners—both visually impaired and sighted—participate to raise funds and awareness and inspire others with disabilities. The team is a member of the Boston Marathon John Hancock Non-Profit Program.

While some visually impaired runners have enough sight to run on their own, most have guides who run with them, often on short tethers, advising them of turns, potholes, potential collisions and other hazards. These running pairs often form long friendships, bonding through their shared challenges.

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