

LONG ISLAND / TOWNS

Long Islanders compete for Runner's World cover



From left, Long Island runners Alex Schneider, of Great Neck, Mike Brannigan, of East Northport, and Eva Casale, of Glen Cove, are competing for the chance to appear on the December 2014 cover of Runner's World magazine. Photo Credit: Tara Conry/Patrick E. McCarthy

By Marlo Jappen

July 21, 2014 3:08 PM

Long Island athletes are vying to be on the cover of Runner's World.

Among them is Alex Schneider, 24, of Great Neck, who finished the 2013 New York City Marathon at 3 hours, 14 minutes and 36 seconds, which was a personal best.

He developed his love for running as a teen when he joined the Rolling Thunder Special Needs program. Schneider has autism.

It was there that he developed a close relationship with Kevin McDermott, who trains him for races.

Alex's mom, Robyn Schneider, said "The running community embraces him. It really warms our hearts to see an elite runner congratulate him when he finishes a race."

Robyn Schneider said Alex saved her from potential injury at the 2013 Boston Marathon. She abandoned her spot directly across from where the bombs exploded to congratulate Alex, who had just finished the race at a quicker-than-normal pace.

Schneider said if her son landed on the cover, it would be a major breakthrough for the autism community.

Another Rolling Thunder runner, Mike Brannigan, 17, of East Northport, is also competing to be on the Runner's World cover. Brannigan finished first at the Rolling Thunder 5k on July 13.

"Having autism made me feel inadequate and different," he tells Runner's World. "It was isolating and scary. When I started running, I began to grow in other areas of my life."

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Also in the mix is [Eva Casale](#), 49, of Glen Cove, who recently [ran seven marathons in seven consecutive days](#) to help raise donations for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

Casale has run 51 marathons.

"Cancer does not end at that finish line," she said after she completed her seventh marathons on July 13. "Cancer ends when we have a cure."

The public can vote at runnersworld.com/CoverContest through Aug 15. (You can also click on the highlighted names above to cast your votes for Schneider, Brannigan and Casale.) Runner's World editors will then select one man and woman to be featured on the December 2014 cover.

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