

## 2019 Best of Best POE

### “Making a Difference by Making our Miles Matter”

The Brunswick Memorial Home Care Team has always been dedicated to helping the community. They also strive to support active and healthy lifestyles for their Care Team and the surrounding community through a variety of challenges and programs. So, for this year the funeral home decided to combine the two. The idea was to enter races, physical competitions, walks, etc. to raise awareness and funds for various causes. The entire Care Team, their family and friends, local law enforcement, clergy, and whomever else they could find were invited to join them on their journey.

In addition to raising awareness and funds Brunswick Memorial Home decided to track the miles they ran, walked, and crawled as an added motivator. For every mile the funeral home would donate an additional amount towards Unbroken Warrior, and for fun see how far geographically they traveled if they added all the miles together. The detail list of all the events and charities that the funeral helped can be found at the end of this document. A few of these events are described in more detail below.

On July 15, 2018, the start of Brunswick Memorial Home’s journey, five staff members laced up their shoes to run in the Annual East Brunswick Memorial VFW Post 133 5k Race. Everyone’s entry fee went toward helping the VFW. Besides running in the race the funeral home helped to bring awareness to the race and to the VFW by posting pictures on Facebook. Every year over 200 people participate in the event. It was a great time for veterans and the community.

On September 29, 2018, the funeral home participated in United Airline’s Annual Plane Pull in Newark Liberty Airport. The event raises funds and awareness for the Special Olympics. They wanted to get our local community involved, so they reached out to the local Police Departments (East Brunswick, South River, and Spotswood) and asked if they wanted to join the team. They were more than willing to take the time to support the great cause and for a bit of competition.

The United Airline’s Plane Pull is comprised of two competitions both involving the team to pull a 93,000 pound airplane ten feet. The first competition was timed, and the fastest team to pull the plane ten feet won. The second competition was lowest combined weight to pull the plane ten feet. Our team named ‘Brunswick & Blue’ was able to pull the plane in 7.06 seconds. This was good enough to secure a second place finish amongst the 40 teams. Later, our team was able to pull the massive 737 with 7 members that weighed a combined 1,393 pounds, which secured another second place finish.

On November 22, 2018, Randy Gagnon teamed up with friends, family, and local clergy member, Rabbi Eric Eisenkramer, to run in the Annual Princeton Turkey Trot. Besides helping the runners build up an appetite for Turkey, the event helps to raise money for the Arm in Arm Food Pantry. The holidays can be especially difficult for families in need so taking time to give back to those families during the holidays is integral to the Entire Care Team at Brunswick Memorial Home

Between January 10, 2019 and January 16, 2019 Michael Kulbacki embarked on a grueling 51.7 mile challenge. He flew down to Disney and entered what they called the Dopey Challenge; 5 races in five days that included a 3.1 Mile, 6.2 Mile, 13.1 Mile, 26.2 mile, and then a 3.1 mile race to top it off. For this event Michael raised money for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. Facebook posts were made to keep the families Brunswick Memorial Home serves updated on his progress through the challenge while bringing more attention to the charity he was raising funds for.

On April 28, 2019, five of our Care Team members participated in the Novo Nordisk New Jersey Marathon. They trained for months to be able to complete the 26.2 mile course. As part of their commitment to the New Jersey Marathon, they raised money and awareness for St. Jude Children's Hospital. This was a first marathon for most of the team, our team displayed great dedication and perseverance to train and ultimately complete the course. The biggest reward was raising donations for such an amazing hospital. The value of giving back to the community is not one person's duty, but rather the responsibility of the whole community.

On June 2, 2019, Randy Gagnon and his sister, Ashley, entered the Navy SEAL Foundation's first annual Boston Frogman 5K swim in the Boston Harbor. The Navy SEAL Foundation raises awareness and donations to support the Navy Special Warfare community. They chose this event to honor their friend, Special Warfare Operator Senior Chief Chad Wilkinson, an active duty SEAL of nearly 22 years, who passed away in October 2018. All the participants that swam the 3.1 miles in Boston Harbor raised an amazing \$70,000 for the foundation. Ashley came in second among all the female swimmers.

In total the funeral home ran, swam, crawled, and pulled over 600 miles. More importantly, the Care Team raised awareness and funds for 17 separate charities. They challenged clergy, first responders, friends, family and countless other members of the community physically and fiscally for the greater good. If you look on a map the total miles the Care Team completed would get the team from East Brunswick to places such as Detroit, MI, Charlotte, NC, and Saint John NB, Canada. It was a monumental accomplishment.

The Care Team plans to continue to count their miles all the way up to the National Funeral Directors Association 2019 convention and expo. The events they have scheduled added to their current total will lead them right to the steps of the convention. Brunswick Memorial Home's year in motion knew no boundaries. It was a journey marked by challenges, courage, and human connection. They may have faltered along the way, but they never stood still. The Care Team from Brunswick Memorial Home made a difference by making every mile count.