

Yes You Can



How can I describe my mother? She is smart, funny and kind, and is devoted to her faith and her family. More importantly, everyone loves her. What do people comment most about her when they meet her? Her smile.

In 1984, my mom was diagnosed with progressive multiple sclerosis at the age of 38. Before her diagnosis, my mother was active. She worked in the school. She had many friends. With this, our family was devastated, relationships were challenged and family roles shifted. In my heart, I lost my mother.

Flash forward some thirty years later—in a way that only God can make things happen—I came face to face with two people that would change the direction of my life. More importantly, they helped me find the mom I had lost years ago.

On a warm day in July 2014, I was at the Mill City Triathlon in Lowell, MA, watching a friend compete. Team Hoyt was competing in the same event. While I had heard of them, I had never met nor seen them compete. I remember seeing a raft on the shore near the river and wondering, “what is that raft for, is it a safety precaution for the swimmers?” Still unsure what the raft was for, I crossed the street to cheer on my friend as she moved to the next part of the race, the bike. As she pedaled off, I wished her well and needed to head home. As I drove away, I saw them.



Team Hoyt. I see Team Hoyt. That raft on the shore was theirs. I began to cheer and clap as I hung out the window of the car, and that’s when it happened. That’s when Rick raised his arm, not only to motion to me he could hear me but also motion to me “Yes You Can.” Witnessing the power of this father-son team was so moving. I was humbled. I immediately began thinking about finding a chair so that I could run with my mom.

As soon as I got home, I looked up Team Hoyt and an overwhelming amount of information popped up in front of my eyes—[websites](#), [articles](#), [images](#) and [videos](#). There they were, Dick and Rick Hoyt, enjoying an incredible sport together, enabling each other the experience of the power of a team, the exhilaration of competing, and the unconditional love of family.

At this point, I was determined to contact someone, **anyone** that could find me a chair, so I, too, could share the exhilaration of competing with my mother.



Within one week, my kids and I set off to pick up a running jogger that a family-owned

manufacturing company was so generously letting us borrow (they build the same one the Hoyts used!). While driving there, I couldn't help but think, after 35+ years in a wheelchair, my mom will have a new chair. She won't have to watch from the sidelines any more--this chair will allow her to race.

We signed up for our first race in September. Team Hoyt was also running this race. Coincidence? Doubtful. How many people can say at their first race they get to meet the team that inspired them? We can.

When we crossed our first finish line, we were hooked and Team Babsie was born. We immediately purchased our own jogger and ran two more races before the end of the year. Since then, we've upgraded our jogger to a Hoyt Racing chair. Now we can participate in many endurance events - 5k's, 10k's, half marathons, marathons, triathlons, charity bike rides and most recently Bike MS: Cape Cod Getaway. Also last summer, a group of friends helped me push her to the top of Mt. Washington!

Each race for me and my mother has not been about our pace or our finish time. Why would we want to rush through something that brings so much joy to us? For me, the joy doesn't come from crossing the finish line, but rather comes from the comments I get at the end of each race from others.

"You should see the smile on your mother's face."