

New York Runner Battles Paralysis and Triumphantly Walks Final Stage of Disney Princess Half Marathon

There was a time when Cheri Srouer couldn't walk or talk, robbed of the most simple tasks by a paralyzing autoimmune disease. But Sunday, the Brooklyn woman showed that the debilitating disease is no match for her as she triumphantly rose from her wheelchair and walked the final stage of the Disney Princess Half Marathon.

Pushed in her wheelchair by her brother-in-law, Srouer stopped about 100 yards from the finish line of the 13.1-mile race and rose from her wheelchair to walk the remaining distance as spectators cheered her every step.

She and Solly Elmann had previously competed in various races. The duo did the Disney Princess Half Marathon two years ago when Elmann pushed Srouer the entire race. They did it again last year but that time Srouer got out of her wheelchair and pushed Elmann in it the final 100 yards. But Sunday's race was the first time she walked unassisted in a race - a feat that comes about 10 years after she was first diagnosed with the autoimmune neurological disease.

Overall, Jackie Pirtle-Hall of St. Charles, Missouri won the race, easily finishing well ahead of the field of more than 25,000 runners. Pirtle-Hall, who recently qualified for the 2020 Olympic Trials, posted a time of 1:18:30 - more than four minutes ahead of second-place finisher Bianca Toledo of Bergenfield, New Jersey, who was followed by Elizabeth Conlon of Montgomery, Maryland (1:24:26).

Additionally, 2019 Miss America Nia Franklin was involved in Disney Princess Half Marathon Weekend, running the 5K race on Friday and participating in the finish line activities during the half marathon on Sunday.