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The 2012 Foot Locker Five Borough Challenge Team, Comprised of Five Runners Overcoming Challenges, Come Together To Run the ING NYC Marathon

New York, September 18, 2012– People are motivated to run for many different reasons. Whether it's for health purposes, a stress reliever, or to enjoy the great outdoors, there is a moment when one decides to embark on their running journey. More often than not, that moment is a result of a challenge one must overcome. What if your journey started because you needed a way to deal with debilitating anxiety attacks? What if your journey began because you were crippled with insecurities due to being overweight? Or, what if that journey helped you deal with the aftereffects of 9/11 or breast cancer?

We've selected five runners who credit running to helping them overcome their challenges. The team will join together for the Foot Locker Five Borough Challenge at this year's ING New York City Marathon on Sunday, Nov.4.

For the 13th consecutive year, Foot Locker is proud to unite five total strangers, one from each of the five boroughs, to participate in this unique "race within a race." The team of runners must run together for the first 13 miles of the marathon, and then they can break away for the remainder of the race. The runner in the group who finishes the marathon in the fastest time will become the Foot Locker Five Borough Challenge Champion, winning a Tiffany trophy, and city-wide bragging rights.

These five inspiring runners -- all unique and outstanding in their own right -- are strong, determined and passionate runners. They are:

Bronx- **Rachel Charlop-Powers**
Brooklyn- **Adrienne Walsh**
Queens- **Tessa Wehrman**
Staten Island- **Sean Cusick**
Manhattan- **Tony Forte**

"Foot Locker is proud to recognize these remarkable runners for their incredible determination and optimism in overcoming hardships while maintaining healthy, active lifestyles," said Jake Jacobs, President and CEO, Foot Locker, U.S. "We are inspired by their tenacity and strength they exhibit in their lives."

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*Following are bios for each of the Foot Locker Five Borough Challenge Runners:

Rachel Charlop-Powers, 30-years-old, Bronx

Rachel is a born and bred Bronx native, who describes the borough full of people who are "tough, funny, driven, energized, and often overlooked." Rachel is a true example of just how tough and driven one can be. In 2010, she lost her mother in a tragic cycling accident in the Bronx. Her mother, Megan, was a well-known and admired public health advocate and activist in the borough she loved, and the main reason Rachel began to run. After training for her first half marathon with her mother in 2005, Rachel had the hopes to one day run a full marathon. After her mother's passing, she realized that training for a full marathon would be the way she would cope with her enormous loss, as well as a way to connect with her mother. "I wanted to take a bite out of this big milestone, knowing that the training and the race would be big enough to parallel the enormity of my grief." Just three months after her mother's death, Rachel ran her first full marathon in Lake Placid, and realized that she was able to survive the death of her mother, while continuing to carry her legacy on. Rachel is proud to represent the borough that turned her into who she is today.

Adrienne Walsh, 45-years-old, Brooklyn

As a young child raised in Brooklyn, Adrienne would watch the marathoners pass by her parents' house, and dream of one day running it. At 16 years old, that dream became a reality, and since 1983, she has run all but two ING NYC Marathons, marking her 31st marathon this year! Adrienne looked to running as a means of staying in shape for her job as a New York Firefighter (she was actually the first female to join an elite rescue company in FDNY history). However, all that changed on September 11, 2001. Adrienne ran across the Brooklyn Bridge to get to work. She approached the Trade Center just as the second tower was collapsing, and was lucky enough to literally be blown into a hallway in an adjacent building that sheltered her. After that day, running became much more to her than staying in shape physically. "Running allowed me to focus away from the events of 9/11. Two years of funerals, street re-namings, and plaque dedications, in addition to my job on a daily basis, running gave me something to take me away from it all, if only for a moment."

Tessa Wehrman, 28-years-old, Queens

Originally from Ohio, Tessa has lived in Queens for the past six years, and loves the mix of different cultures it offers. Upon moving to New York City, Tessa discovered the Achilles Track club, and volunteered to guide disabled athletes in races. She didn't realize that those runners she supported, would soon, in turn, become a major support system of hers. Last year in May of 2011, Tessa was diagnosed with breast cancer at the age of 26. Blindsided, and devastated, she had a double mastectomy on the same day as the Brooklyn Half Marathon, which she had planned to run. "I decided at that moment, that cancer was just a different type of marathon, and I was going to take it one mile at a time." The Achilles Track team athletes helped inspire Tessa to return to running just weeks after her surgery. "I was surrounded by strong role models in my recovery and couldn't have done it without them. *They* guided *me* in my first 5k after surgery." During chemotherapy, Tessa used running as a way to stay in control and keep motivated, proud that the cancer couldn't take that away from her. During recovery from her final reconstruction surgery, the week of the 2011 ING NYC Marathon, she vowed to run the race this year. This will be Tessa's "comeback."

Sean Cusick, 43-years-old, Staten Island

A native Staten Islander, Sean truly loves his borough, and vows to never leave. He began running as an attempt to stop his debilitating anxiety attacks. His attacks were so disruptive that he recalls driving over a bridge, and literally having to stop the car and stepping out of it, in an attempt to relax. He had tried every medicine and therapy available, but the only thing that helped him manage his attacks was running. In addition, Sean was also overweight. Previous attempts at dieting did not work, but he soon realized that running not only helped him with his anxiety, but also helped him shed the pounds. His motivation to continue leading a healthy life are his two daughters. This will be Sean's ninth marathon.

Tony Forte, 30-years-old, Manhattan

Two years ago, Tony Forte weighed over 300 pounds, and never ran a mile in his life. He was constantly ridiculed as a child, and at times crippled by his insecurities. At the age of 28, with a new career as a lawyer, Tony knew that he needed to make a change, or his life would be cut short due to his unhealthy lifestyle. He began running as part of his plan to get fit. "I couldn't run very far at first. I remember my goal was to run during every chorus part of a song on my iPod, and walk the rest." Through a healthier diet and his new found love of running, Tony has lost 140 pounds! After two years of focusing on improving *his* life, Tony's goal this year is to focus on others. He volunteers with many NYC organizations, including Gods Love We Deliver and the Point Foundation, as well as, taking on pro bono cases as a lawyer. This will be Tony's first marathon.

Foot Locker, Inc.

Foot Locker, Inc., operates approximately 3,350 athletic specialty retail stores in 23 countries in North America, Europe, Australia and New Zealand. Through its Foot Locker, Footaction, Lady Foot Locker, Kids Foot Locker, Champs Sports, and CCS retail stores, as well as its direct-to-customer channel footlocker.com, Eastbay, and CCS.com, the company is the leading provider of athletic footwear and apparel.

The ING New York City Marathon

NYRR's premier event, the ING New York City Marathon is the most loved and most inclusive marathon in the world, attracting elite athletes and recreational runners alike for the challenge and thrill of a lifetime. The race has grown tremendously since it began in 1970 with just 127 runners racing four laps of Central Park. Now, more than 47,000 participants from all over the globe flock to New York City every November for an adrenaline-filled road tour of all five boroughs, starting on Staten Island at the foot of the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge and ending in Central Park. Some run for prize money or bragging rights, others for charity or their personal best. All are cheered on by more than two million live spectators and a TV audience of 330 million.

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