

WHO IS YOUR RUNNING HERO? Is it the coach who introduced you to the sport that's now your passion? Or the buddy who's stuck with you through side stitches and calf cramps, rainy days, and heat waves? Or the frontrunner who sets a record each time he toes the line? If they've inspired, encouraged, or wowed you, the word hero is justified. Over the past year, six people have done that for us by accomplishing remarkable feats or using running to improve the lives of others. Among them: an amputee who's given disabled people the empowering experience of crossing a finish line, an elite adventure racer who has helped women beat the odds and live out their athletic dreams, and two teens who organized a race in Thailand to benefit refugee children. They are our 2009 Heroes of Running. We think they'll inspire, encourage, and wow you, too. →