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Going the extra mile

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Cozen O'Connor's Christopher Hennessy finds joy in running and volunteering at Chicago Marathon

By [Sarah Mansur](#)

Chicago Lawyer correspondent

At age 44, Christopher Hennessy decided to run his first marathon.

Other than running high school in track, the Cozen O'Connor partner had no prior running experience. After doing some research, Hennessy discovered the Chicago Area Runners Association, a nonprofit running group that helps educate and train runners.

"The starting point of figuring out how to run a marathon is, I'm going to join a running organization that has a marathon training program that is going to help me do it," he said.

He made the decision in October 2011, and he ran the Chicago marathon by October 2012. He joined the CARA board in 2016, and in 2018, he became board president. Hennessy isn't running the Chicago Marathon on Sunday, but he will be volunteering during the race.

"I'm a big believer that everybody who runs races should volunteer at least one race a year."

Chicago Lawyer spoke with Hennessy about why he decided to run a marathon, how he views running as an outlet and how he benefits from CARA.

Chicago Lawyer: *What motivated you to decide to run the marathon?*

Chris Hennessy: Where we live in Streeterville, we would walk down the street and you would see the first section of the marathon coming across the bridge. It's the beginning the race so it's just a mass of people.



Christopher S. Hennessy

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If you go down there and watch, you see all the different kinds of people who have decided to do this – all different ages, all different body types, all different everything.

A lot of people watch that and think, 'I'd like to try to do that,' which I think is what I decided – I'm going to try to do that.

CL: *Do you find that running can be an outlet to practicing law?*

CH: Absolutely. You have to explain to people sometimes how you pass the time when you are running for two hours for a training run. You can certainly listen to music, you can think about everything, you can think about nothing. The chance to go spend two hours not really thinking about anything except your pace, one foot in front of the other. It's the exact opposite of this job. It's the simplest of activities that anybody can do...To just go out there and do that, it's almost the balance against the day to day existence of law practice.

CL: *What are some of the benefits that you derived from CARA?*

CH: CARA is all about the community of runners and this shared activity. In many respects, running is a singular activity – just you doing the running. But when you are doing that activity with other people doing that same activity or you have at least the opportunity to do that, there is a sense of community in that.

Especially when you're training for the marathon in the heat of the summer and there is a training run of 14 miles. Certainly your training is the motivation to be prepared to run the marathon. But the group of people that you are running with as part of the training program are also your motivation because you're all in it together.