Every October runners from across the USA and around the world travel to the Bank of America Chicago Marathon. In 2014 40,802 of them trod their way for 26.2 miles through 29 diverse Chicago neighborhoods towards the same final destination in Grant Park. Along the way 12,000 volunteers and hundreds of thousands of spectators offered their support and applause as runners accomplished something magnificent by fighting their way to the finish line on Columbus Drive.

The Bank of America Chicago Marathon represents more than a historic footrace. It showcases a community of runners energized and fueled by a reason to run. From the debut marathoner and charity runner to the race veteran and elite athlete participants testify to what the marathon is all about: discovering who you are, raising funds for a charitable cause, keeping a streak alive and stoking the competitive fire within. Race day animates thousands of stories from the front, middle and back of the pack. Each story endures long after the Marathon journey is complete and each story highlights the human potential and capacity to not only survive, but also thrive.

Throughout its 37-year history, the Bank of America Chicago Marathon has staged four world records, two American records and countless personal bests. From its roots as a local race to its current status as a world-class global event it has remained true to the vision of its original organizers: the Chicago Marathon is "the people's race anyone can come and enjoy." More than 660,000 participants have crossed the finish line since 1977. Every finisher etches his or her name in history, and every finisher – from the elite athlete to the six-hour runner – is victorious.

In its latest edition the Bank of America Chicago Marathon had a record number of finishers and saw unparalleled support along the course from spectators and volunteers, but the race was not always a global sensation. The idea to bring a marathon to Chicago started in 1976 among a small group of local running enthusiasts. On 25 September 1977 this group realized their vision when they hosted 4,200 participants in the first ever Chicago Marathon.

The Bank of America Chicago Marathon has since evolved from a community event into one of the six ‘World Marathon Majors’ that now welcomes runners from all 50 states and more than 100 countries. As a result of its national and international draw the marathon helps raise millions of dollars for a variety of charitable causes while also generating $253 million in annual economic impact to its host city, according to a report by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign’s Regional Economics Applications Laboratory (R.E.A.L.).
All roads lead to Rome