

MEET THE RUNNERS

ALEX G.

Your generosity
and friendship
made me feel
at home.



RUNNING TO BENEFIT
DOUG FLUTIE JR.
FOUNDATION FOR AUTISM

GOAL **\$100,000**



Brotherly love has inspired this financial planner. He's aiming to raise an ambitious six-figure goal for autism.

BY JACQUELINE CAIN

Alex C., 32, grew up in Waltham, Mass., with his parents and younger brother, Thomas, who was diagnosed with autism in 1996. "There was such limited information out there" when they were kids, Alex remembers, so his parents proactively learned as much as they could about the neurological and developmental disorder. They also discovered what resources were — or should have been — available. "My parents did everything they could to make sure he got what he needed," Alex says. Thomas, now 30, lives independently in his own apartment and works full time.

As a student at Xaverian Brothers High School, Alex spent time volunteering in a Waltham special needs pre-K classroom. "It was kind of a full circle moment, being a

teacher's aide for some of Thomas's original teachers," Alex says.

It's important work: Early intervention can have major long-term positive effects on quality of life for people with autism, according to the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. But things like family training, speech therapy, and hearing impairment services for children with, or suspected of, having autism aren't always covered by insurance.

That's why Alex is so deeply committed to the Doug Flutie Jr. Foundation for Autism. Inspired by his own family's journey, he's determined to ensure other families have the support his own could have used. That passion fuels him to keep going — so much so that he's not only training for his third Boston Marathon, but

he's also set an ambitious goal: raising \$100,000 to help fund the foundation's programs.

One of the ways the Flutie Foundation makes an impact is by providing grants and direct financial assistance to families navigating autism diagnoses. "I know my family could have used a lot of help growing up," he says.

Alex and his wife, Giana, who now live in Medford, are expecting their first child in May. The couple both ran the 2024 Boston Marathon, fundraising more than \$81,000 combined for the Flutie Foundation.

Now, Alex is seizing this significant moment.

"With a baby on the way, I don't know when the next marathon might be," he says. "I wanted to put my all into one more fundraising effort."

Dear Alex,

I am so grateful for your participation in your third marathon for the Flutie Foundation. Running for your brother Thomas, and sharing his story and impact, is incredibly uplifting. Your generosity and friendship have made me feel at home, and they've given me the courage to finally disclose my autism diagnosis, which I had been hesitant to do.

To the Flutie Foundation, I want to express my deepest gratitude. Your organization has provided me with the chance to embrace life to the fullest.

Without the Flutie Foundation and individuals like Alex, I wouldn't be nearly the person I am today. I am proud to identify as autistic, and I firmly believe that autism can be a source of strength and inspiration for others.

Mike Palmer



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