

2024 Annual Report



Prepared by
Brendan Aylward

December 3rd, 2024



Table Of Contents

Our Mission

Letter from Leadership

Meet Our Team

Precursor on Language

Pillars of AdaptX

Education Platform

AdaptX Podcast

Research

Speaking Engagements

Boston Marathon

Unified 5k and AdaptXpo

Unified Endurance Project

Growth and Development

Our Mission

AdaptX is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to addressing health disparities experienced by individuals with intellectual and physical disabilities through education, advocacy, and opportunity.

We believe that barriers to physical activity for people with disabilities exist, not because of the specific characteristics of their diagnosis, but because of an inaccessible, uneducated, and ableist society. We create solutions and a community of advocates and allies that will change this. We hope that you'll join us in this pursuit.





Letter from Leadership

2024 has been an incredible year for our organization. We've built the foundation for what we believe will greatly impact thousands of lives and transform the fitness industry.

In the literature we see a significant disparity between the health of those with and without disabilities. Barriers and facilitators to physical activity for disabled populations are well-established. We've begun to develop solutions to addressing these barriers and amplifying the facilitators.

Our hypothesis is that this health crisis is not caused by the disability itself but a lack of knowledge and awareness among health and fitness professionals regarding the execution and economic value of inclusion. Unified Health and Performance has been an incubator and serves as evidence for the principles and concepts that we teach.

As an educational company, our bias and hypothesis is that more knowledge among these professionals will lead to more opportunities and better training outcomes for the clients they serve. But we emphasize that education without action is insufficient. Preparation can often be procrastination in disguise. There is no learning experience more transformative than hands-on experience, even if you feel underprepared. 23-year-old me certainly did not have all of the answers when I opened Unified Health and Performance. But I was deeply committed to finding them.

In 2019, AdaptX was a finalist in Arc Tank, a pitch competition for businesses that improved the lives of those with disabilities. During my 5-minute presentation at the JFK Presidential Library in Boston, I told the audience and judges that I was going to work with gyms around the world and especially YMCAs because of their synergistic mission of inclusion and accessibility. At the time, the concept was not validated by the competition as ultimately, I wasn't selected as a recipient of funding. But I still believed and more so than proving them wrong, I wanted to prove myself right.



Although this capital would have expedited the growth of AdaptX, after reflecting back on the last five years and the trajectory of the company, I realize that I needed those years of slower growth to learn and iterate. My understanding of inclusion and adaptive fitness has evolved from the hundreds of conversations that I've had with people with and without disabilities. The educational material that we're releasing in February is exponentially better than the initial curriculum that I created in 2019.

Over the last five years, my belief in what we have built and continue to create through AdaptX has been validated. Since the Arc Tank pitch, we've worked with gyms around the world and dozens of YMCA chapters throughout the country. Last week, in what felt like a full circle moment, I spoke at the Alliance of Massachusetts YMCA Conference at Gillette Stadium. We've had a diverse group of professionals take our courses and our curriculum has slowly made our way around the world.

During the pandemic, more than a quarter of gyms and health studios closed but thanks to the incredible support of our community and effort by our Unified Health and Performance staff, our gym here in Massachusetts continued to grow. We simultaneously continued to build the AdaptX curriculum and community, grow our team, beta test a course, and receive feedback from more than 300 coaches who took it.

This has allowed us to arrive at where we are today. I'm excited and honored to share the development of AdaptX with you in this report.

Brendan Aylward

Meet Our Board



DR. CHRIS JOYCE

BOARD - DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH



OWEN ANKETELL

BOARD - TREASURER



LADD LAVALLEE

BOARD - GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT



SARAH SKEELS

BOARD - EDUCATION



KAREN REGAN

BOARD - MARKETING

Our Educators



Peter Morel



Brian Helsel



Steve Ferreira



Beth Terranova



Tyler Garner



Amanda Kloo



Nick Giovinazzo



Tim Morris



Adam Bleakney



Jaden Movold



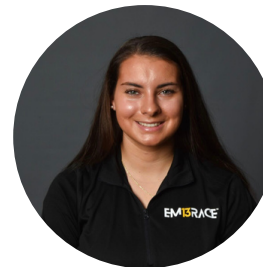
Evan Schwerbrock



Jackie Shakar



Beck Schutte



Alexia Michitti



Benjamin Conner

Read about our education team at www.adaptx.org/team



| Precursor on Language

As an individual who is not currently disabled, I don't intend to speak on behalf of those with disabilities but I have made it my life's work to try to make theirs better.

Disability language and etiquette is ever-evolving and context-dependent. Some people prefer person-first language (individual with Autism), while others prefer identity-first (Autistic individual). Throughout this report, we will alternate between person-first and identity-first language.

We'll refer to clients with disabilities as "adaptive athletes" as it is the most commonly recognized term in our industry. However, that does not mean that these clients are pursuing any athletic goal.

Pillars of AdaptX

The mission, vision, and values of our organization



Education

Rewriting the narrative on disability through the AdaptX curriculum, Podcast and Unified 5k

Publishing educational material for health and fitness professionals to create more accessible facilities and effective programs for individuals with intellectual and physical disabilities

Advocacy

Establishing our Adaptive Athlete and Ambassador Fund to address socioeconomic barriers to physical activity for disabled populations

Speaking to individuals and organizations on the economic incentive and execution of inclusion and accessibility

Creating economic opportunities for people with disabilities by hiring a diverse team and establishing an adaptive athlete prize purse for our Unified 5k series

Opportunity

Our AdaptX coaches create the communities where people with disabilities have the opportunity to consistently engage in physical activity

The global expansion of our Unified 5k series creates opportunity for meaningful participation and competition for disabled athletes

Our Educational curriculum highlights the untapped economic opportunity for businesses that prioritize inclusion and accessibility

Education Platform

We are excited to share an updated eLearning platform and course catalog with you in February.

Since 2020, we've had the privilege of sharing our original curriculum with more than 400 current and aspiring health and fitness professionals. The feedback that we received has been instrumental in arriving at the product we will be publishing in 2025.

We will be transitioning from a singular 18-module online course to a library of more than a dozen shorter courses covering a variety of topics. All of these courses are being co-designed with a diverse team of educators that we introduced you to earlier in this report.

Our goal is to provide education for more than just the fitness professional but everyone from the front desk staff to the marketing department - as a commitment throughout the entire organization is necessary to create an inclusive and accessible experience.

The material we release in the coming months will undoubtedly be the most comprehensive learning experience for anyone who wants to expand their knowledge of inclusion, accessibility, and adaptive fitness.

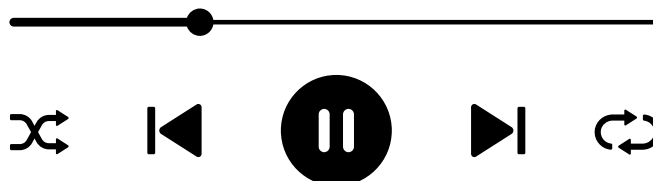
Approved for CEUs through



The AdaptX Podcast

A large part of our educational initiative and commitment to amplifying disabled voices is the AdaptX podcast. We've published 49 episodes in 2024, and 75 since starting the show in July of 2023.

You can find the show on Spotify or Apple Podcasts by searching "The AdaptX Podcast"



The AdaptX Podcast



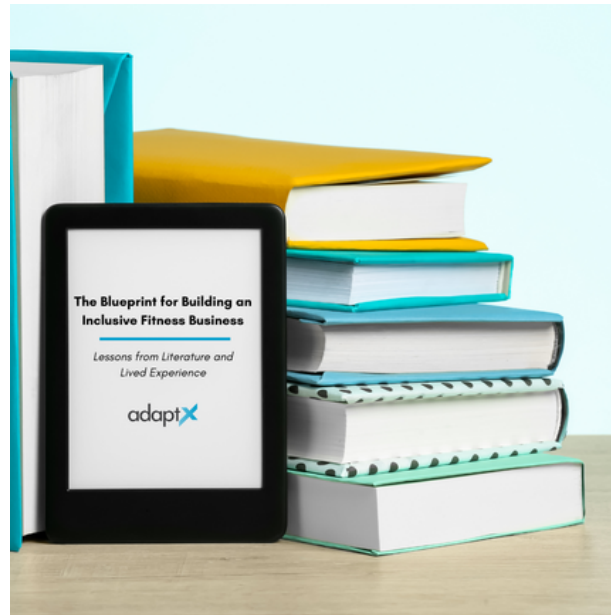
“

“While listening to the episode with Sam Schaefer about his journey on losing his leg and finding purpose. I was moved by his story so I sent the link to one of my clients who is still struggling with losing his leg. I also started following Sam on Instagram... While researching and developing the best moves for this group I relied on Sam's instagram and Youtube channel for a lot of the exercises...I love making connections and collaborating with like minded individuals and I wanted to thank you for assisting me and so many others in that.”

“While I know part of the narrative in your podcasts is about the concept of being inspiring for the right reasons, I think that you cannot help but be inspiring when you do something, persevere, where others may not even consider trying. Your commitment to your passion and mission is what keeps me trying again and again. And there have been many days these last few years where it took all my effort to keep at it. The love, humor and community at Unified has been my rock...Your podcasts have me learning, laughing, crying and apparently I need to get my hearing checked. They have been the reason to get in the car to go to work on many days. I have learned so much and share with everyone how beneficial they are.”

Blueprint eBook

Coming February 3rd, 2025



“

This is incredible. Never before have I seen a resource like it. The text is incredibly comprehensive, outside the box thinking, yet addresses real world questions that have not been asked or answered before for people to be able to get going on their creative purposeful missions to make a difference. I think you address a lot of key things that people have questions about, but don't know where to turn to ask them. I would be really interested in this as somebody that has similar passions and interest as you. I really believe that this has a place in our community

- Hal Hargrave



THE PERFECT STEP
PARALYSIS RECOVERY CENTERS

Research

Thanks to the effort of our research director, Dr. Chris Joyce, and our growing network of universities and research partners, we've laid the foundation for an exciting 2025.

Partners



MASSACHUSETTS
COLLEGE of PHARMACY
and HEALTH SCIENCES

Submitted an RO3 to NIH

Adolescents and young adults with Down syndrome (DS) are less likely to engage in physical activity due to a lack of time, caregiver unfamiliarity with exercise, inaccessible or non-inclusive fitness facilities, and exercise programs that are not catered to the physical and intellectual differences common in people with DS. To address this, we've submitted an RO3 grant to the National Institute of Health's National Center for Medical Rehabilitation Research aimed at studying:

- 1) the feasibility, fidelity, and acceptability of a high-intensity exercise and education protocol in adolescents with Down syndrome
- 2) changes in physical activity, strength, cardiorespiratory fitness, and physical mobility over the 12-week high-intensity training program.



Research

Biomechanics and Bioenergetics of Duo Running



Collaborating with the sports science team from New Balance in Boston, we have begun to refine a protocol to assess how biomechanics and energy cost differs when running with and without the wheelchair. They presented their proprietary findings to our team last month from our initial session and we'll be conducting a larger scale research project with a greater sample size in 2025.



Click the image below to check out a video highlighting the project



Speaking Engagements



Conferences

- Athletic Trainers of Massachusetts Spring Symposium at Holy Cross
- National Inclusion Project - Power of Play Conference
- Massachusetts YMCA Alliance Annual Conference at Gillette Stadium

Disability ERGs

- Berkshire Bank Abilities in Motion ERG
- DELL Technologies TrueAbility

University Lectures

- University of Arizona - NSC 320: Nutrition, Exercise, and Health Promotion
- Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences - Advanced Topics in Therapeutic Exercise



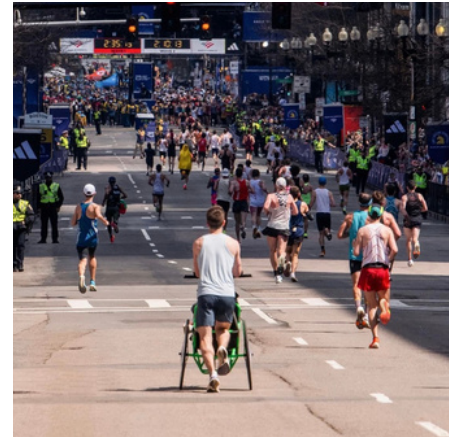
Boston Marathon

Jacob and I had the opportunity to run the Boston Marathon in 2024, realizing a dream that I had had for years. My favorite part about Boston was that Jacob had his name on his bib so it was essentially three hours straight of people screaming his name and he felt like a celebrity. That was an image that I had in my head for years preparing for that race and it got me through a lot of harder workouts.

Since we qualified for the race by running a marathon in under 3 hours, we didn't have a fundraising commitment, so we used the opportunity to raise money for AdaptX. Our campaign was able to raise an additional \$5,754 for the organization.

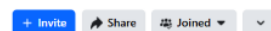
It was an honor to be a part of the largest duo field ever at the Boston Marathon. If you want to check out some of the recap videos that we made after the Vineyard and Boston Marathons as well as some training footage leading up to the race, you can check out the links below.

This picture of me, Jacob, Rick, Dick, and Bryan means a lot to me. It was from the start line of the New Bedford Half Marathon in 2016, the first half marathon Jacob and I did together. It's pretty cool to see it used as the cover photo for the 2025 Boston Marathon Facebook group!



Boston Marathon 2025

Private group · 18.1K members





Community involvement was an essential component of our organization's success in 2024; especially in the preparation and execution of our Unified 5k and AdaptXpo. Each year, we've managed to grow the event, both in size, fundraising success, and additional activities.



Click the image below to check out our recap video from the 2024 Race



THANK YOU



2024 Unified 5k Sponsors



BOLTON
GLOBAL CAPITAL



Sun Life

 **Berkshire Bank**
Life is exciting. Let us help.*

H.R. PRESCOTT
SONS INCORPORATED



Point32Health



 **Avidia Bank**

If you're interested in supporting the 2025 events, email brendan@adaptx.org



Unified 5k and AdaptXpo Series

In 2025, we'll be hosting Unified 5Ks throughout the U.S. At each race, we will:

Donate a Running Blade to an Amputee



Donate a Running Chair or Handcycle to someone with a physical disability



Educate and outfit a local fitness facility with adaptive equipment



Bring a Unified 5k to your community in 2025

Learn more at
www.unified5k.org



UNiFIED

Endurance Project

an AdaptX initiative

BU Spark! is an innovation and experiential learning lab housed in the Boston University faculty of Computing & Data Sciences. Every year, teams of students and faculty take on computer science projects proposed by companies and community members.



We submitted a proposal earlier this Fall and our project was accepted. A team of students will start working on the UX/UI for the mobile application during this upcoming Spring Semester and finish an MVP during the Fall '25 semester.

We are unable to disclose the entirety of the project, but it revolves around addressing barriers to physical activity for people with disabilities through a comprehensive network of individuals and organizations - a community that we've been building over the last five years.





Growth and Development

Looking ahead to 2025...

2025 is going to be a year of significant growth for our organization.

We'll be launching a new website and eLearning platform, publishing dozens of amazing conversations through the podcast, hosting events around the world, and collaborating with partner organizations to create more opportunities for people with disabilities to be physically active. I'll continue to share the work that AdaptX does digitally through our online presence as well as in-person through university lectures, keynotes, and conferences. We already have several on the calendar for 2025.

One of the things we're most excited about for 2025 is the expansion of our Unified 5k and AdaptXpo series. Stay tuned for an announcement later this month on where throughout the world you'll be able to find a Unified 5k in 2025. The event includes a lot of really exciting and impactful pieces to make each local community more inclusive and accessible.

If you're interested in learning more about bringing an inclusive road race to your community, there is still time to join our team of 30+ people making these events happen. Click the button below to reach out if you'd like to host an event or support the growth of our inclusive road race series.

[Bring a Unified 5k to
your Community.](#)



Ways to Support

If you'd like to support our work, here is how.

- Make a monetary contribution and see if your employer has a matching program
- Contribute an appreciated stock position that you've held for more than one year to our investment portfolio for a tax advantage
- Leave a [Google Review for AdaptX by clicking here](#)
- Search "AdaptX Podcast" on Spotify or Apple Podcasts and leave a rating and review. Tell a friend about the show!
- Subscribe to the [AdaptX Newsletter by clicking here](#)
- Join us as a participant or volunteer for one of our Unified 5k events in 2025
- Set up a peer-to-peer fundraising page through [our Give Lively Campaign](#)

[**Make a Donation**](#)



Compliance Information

Our organization is a registered 501(c)(3) charitable organization, as recognized by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). This designation affirms our commitment to operating exclusively for charitable, educational, or scientific purposes, as defined under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. We adhere strictly to all applicable federal, state, and local laws governing nonprofit organizations, ensuring transparency and accountability in our operations.

Contributions made to our organization are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law. As a donor, you may deduct your contributions on your federal income tax return, subject to the IRS guidelines and limitations applicable to your individual circumstances. We provide receipts for all donations upon request, including the necessary information to assist you in claiming these deductions. Please consult your tax advisor for specific guidance on how this may apply to your situation.

We are deeply grateful for the generosity of our supporters, whose contributions enable us to advance our mission and create a meaningful impact in the communities we serve. If you have questions regarding our tax-exempt status or need additional documentation to support your donation, please do not hesitate to contact us. Thank you for your support and trust in our work.



Contact Information



brendan@adaptx.org



www.adaptx.org

417 Bolton Road
Lancaster, MA 01523

Join the [Facebook Page](#)

Follow our [Instagram Page](#)

Subscribe to the [Newsletter here](#)

Subscribe to and leave a rating for the AdaptX Podcast on
Spotify or Apple Podcasts

