



## World Class Athlete to Lead *RUN FOR AUTISM*

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Arlington, VA-- Doug Marocco has proudly represented the United States and Marine Corps at high-level athletic competitions around the world both in uniform and in running gear. On May 1, this World Class athlete set his sights on a new goal, the cause of autism, as OAR's first Director of the *RUN FOR AUTISM*.

"The growth of the *RUN FOR AUTISM* has been incredible," said Mike Maloney, OAR's Executive Director. "Our runners put so much into training and raising money for autism research, we want to ensure OAR gives them the best support we can. In Doug Marocco, we have a man who has the skills to lead our program and the experience to guide our runners as they take on the challenges of distance running."

Marocco's list of achievements is noteworthy. He has medaled at the ITU Triathlon Worlds and Pan-American Championships as a member of the Team USA. In addition, he is a four-time Military Triathlon National Champion, and former United States Amateur Triathlon National Champion. He has competed in over 250 races including such prestigious events as the Hawaii Ironman, Military World Championships and ITU World Championships with 42 overall wins.

Marocco has been honored as a former Timmie Award recipient, Armed Forces Athlete of the Year and was twice named Marine Corps Athlete of the Year for his accomplishments in triathlon and running. Most recently, he was one of five athletes chosen to represent the Department of Defense and appeared on a commemorative box of Cheerios. In 2004, upon his retirement, was presented the first ever Marine Corps Lifetime Achievement Award for his contributions to the All-Marine Sports Program.

Marocco chose to leave a job in a defense-related business to join OAR. "This job allows me to direct my passion for running, fitness, and health toward a higher purpose," said Marocco. "One of OAR's ultimate goals is to change lives. My work with the *RUN FOR AUTISM* gives me the opportunity to help people who run change their lives through improved health and help children and adults with autism by raising funds for autism research. It's the job of a lifetime for me."

Marocco's immediate goal is to build the teams for The LaSalle Bank Chicago Marathon and the Marine Corps Marathon. As an official charity partner with both races, OAR has highly-prized, guaranteed entries. With both races expected to close to public registration within the next 30 days, Marocco expects the rush of runners who want to run to begin soon.

"We're ready, and I can't wait to get started," he said. "OAR has a reputation for taking care of its runners all the way through the Finish Line, and I will make sure it continues. We have training

support for those who need it, an outstanding fundraising support package, and a team in place to make Race Day special for the runners and their personal supporters. In the future, we hope to add additional events and fitness related sports such as triathlon and swimming to increase autism awareness and financial contributions.”

To contact Doug Marocco, call (866) 361-9710, x 228 or e-mail: [dmarocco@researchautism.org](mailto:dmarocco@researchautism.org). To learn more about the *RUN FOR AUTISM* or sign up, please visit [www.researchautism.org](http://www.researchautism.org).

**ABOUT OAR:** The Organization for Autism Research (OAR) is a national, nonprofit organization formed and led by relatives of children and adults with autism and Asperger Syndrome. OAR is dedicated to promoting research that can be applied to help families, educators, caregivers, and individuals with autism find much-needed answers to their immediate and urgent questions. Committed to the excellence in its services to the autism community, OAR seeks to fund applied research that will make a difference in individual lives; provide information that is timely, useful, and cost-efficient; and offer opportunities for the autism community to collaborate and make advances together.

In its first four years, OAR has awarded 17 grants totaling more than \$650,000 for applied research studies, made \$27,000 in grants to graduate students conducting research related to autism and published three community-friendly resource guides in its Life Journey through Autism guide series: A Parent’s Guide to Research, An Educator’s Guide to Autism and An Educator’s Guide to Asperger Syndrome.