

## A thank you from me, my family, and from The Seeing Eye

### Zion 100 – 2018 Race Report

I wanted to reach out to all of you who contributed to The Seeing Eye in my Brother's name and fill you in on the 100-mile run. It started out simply as another cool race on my running schedule and ended as a meaningful tribute to John, my brother, his legacy and to our family. What an emotional ride this has been for me personally, thank you for taking the ride with me by contributing and for offering great support to me as the race approached.

Our combined efforts will make a difference in the lives of others, who like my brother, faced significant physical challenges in a sighted world. We raised over \$15,000 for training special puppies who grow up to be important animals in the lives of sight-impaired people. It's amazing what we have done together, thank you!

Many of you who contributed to this fundraiser knew my brother. Others who contributed did not. And for those who did not I would like to share a few thoughts about who my brother was.

#### John

John was a guy who liked to laugh, work hard and tell a good joke. He was full of life, boisterous and could spin a yarn with the best of them! He was one hell of a business man, very smart and had common sense. If John told you he would do something you could count on him to follow-through. If you needed encouragement or anything was bothering you, John would take the time to listen, support you and help you solve your problem. John didn't spend much time worrying about himself and his difficulties, he spent it instead helping others and finding ways to deal with whatever life threw at him. The guy never complained and was as brave as they come.

John and I were raised on a dairy and the farm never left either of us in many ways. We talked about where we came from all the time. It was (is) our identity and our pride to have been brought up where we were. We talked about the Freiss brothers with admiration (our dad and our uncle) and looked up to the two of them throughout our adult lives.

John loved his family especially his three awesome kids. He talked about them and their accomplishments incessantly. They have lots of accomplishments to talk about. He was so proud of them.

All in all, a life well-lived. My brother, John, was a very close friend, an awesome brother and meant so much to so many others.

#### The Race

Zion was an amazing experience for so many reasons. Let me take you through some highs and lows and share a few photos with you from the race itself.

Highs:

- I set up the fundraiser after my brother passed and we achieved our goal of \$15,000! Miraculously, we crossed the \$15,000 mark as I was preparing to go to sleep the night before the race began.

- I completed the 100-mile course in 25 hours and 22 minutes. This was 9 hours ahead of the 34-hour cutoff for the race. I ended up finishing in 41<sup>st</sup> out of about 250 participants who started. At mile 22 I was in 135<sup>th</sup> place and throughout the rest of the race I climbed from that position to 41<sup>st</sup> patiently and consistently. I'm very happy about how I consistently improved throughout the distance.
- I accomplished to do what I set out to do by dedicating this race to John and raising money for his favorite cause.

Lows:

- The rain early in the race and a very tough stretch from mile 70 to mile 77 before I reached the Virgin Desert Aid station were moments of soul searching that inevitably happen in any long-distance race I've ever done. "What have I gotten myself into?" What was I thinking?" There are just times where the discomfort you feel exceeds the determination you need complete the task at hand.
- Kicking my right toe at least 5 to 10 times into big rocks over the course of the race. That really hurt!

I simply can't thank you all enough for being part of my effort to honor John and to support The Seeing Eye. You've made a difference in the world.

Jim Freiss



5:45 AM – My crew and pacer Mike and I 15 minutes before the gun went off to start the race – great race shirts that we developed with the Seeing Eye!



Coming into Dalton Wash at Mile 18 – raining the first 18 miles and my shoes were 5 pounds each with clay hanging off them!



Coming into Dalton Wash a second time at Mile 33 – rain starting to clear. Fortunately the rest of the race was dry and much more mud free!



On top of Gooseberry Mesa at Mile 44 – what amazing views once the sun came out! The valley floor where I had come from earlier in the race is 2,000 feet below me! Four big climbs over the 100 miles helped make for tired legs!



The sun rising on Saturday – 25 hours and 22 minutes after the gun went off. Finished! Hard to describe the feeling each time I cross a 100-mile finish line!





Back home with my new customized 100-mile finisher decal from Zion 100 – “Run for the Pups”!