# Inspiration Corner: Alice Eaddy, Paralympic Athlete

By Sherel Beslanovitz

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Neither thunder nor lightning can stop Alice Eaddy on race day!  Alice, shown in the photo at right hurling the shotput, is a national track and field competitor on the Blind Athletes, Inc. team, and she’s DeafBlind. Alice summarizes her athleticism in this way: “I’m definitely a unique, national level competitor. I don’t go at my sports endeavors halfway. I compete to look good and be reasonably, and realistically, competitive. I’m not just a competitor, I give track and field everything I’ve got.” Alice thrives as an athlete and encourages other deafblind people to participate in track and field sports.

Alice especially enjoys the camaraderie on the field, and she always makes an effort to communicate with her competitors who accept her competitive spirit without knowledge of the duality of her deafblindness. To foster those exchanges at every meet, she brings communication cards and a dry erase marker, as well as her mobility cane and her guide dog, Wanda. She also enjoys the check-in process and meet and greet events, as she says they’re good times to get to know people. “Sometimes I’m in groups with youngsters under 12, and I’ve learned the value of a good knock-knock joke to pass the time of slow moving events,” Alice adds.

In the 2019 Great Lakes Games in Chicago, Alice won first place in her age group in the 4K, shot put, javelin, discus, and the 100-, 200- and 400-meter runs. She used a guide runner for the 200- and 400-meter runs. In 2018, Alice participated and medaled in the Rothman Orthopaedics 8K in Philadelphia, where her completion time for the race-walk was 1 hour, 17 minutes and 48 seconds, and she placed 44th in her age group in the women’s Division of almost 2,000 athletes. Shown on the left is Alice with her guide dog, Wanda, at the 2018 Arizona World Para Athletics Grand Prix - Desert Challenge Games, where she won gold in the javelin and bronze for the 400-meter run.  Alice says that she has high expectations for herself, and she doesn’t quit. When her coaches give her a target pace to shoot for, she tries to nail it every time.

Alice has a cochlear implant and a hearing aid, but bad weather often precludes her from using them. Even if she is wearing them, Alice can’t hear the start gun, so an official alerts her to begin by tapping on her left shoulder, and there is also an official at the finish line. These accommodations ensure she starts and finishes at the right time with the group.  Alice sums up her sports participation by saying, “I know that I’m a role model for the DeafBlind Community. My participation allows the public to see that people who have differing abilities do not let them get in the way of living their lives. It makes me proud of how I can put myself out there and GO FOR IT!!!”