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# STILL Fearless



In advance of International Women's Day on Thursday, Metro spoke to Boston Marathon icon Kathrine Switzer about how she's still empowering and inspiring women. 5



# Boston Marathon icon still sprinting toward progress for women

Kathrine Switzer will be on a panel with four other iconic women on Thursday for an International Women's Day event hosted by her nonprofit 261 Fearless.

Now, on Thursday, she'll speak with four other "game-changing" women about the moments that kickstarted their own iconic trajectories as part of a panel to celebrate International Women's Day.

by Ayanna Pressley, the first woman of color elected to the Boston City Council now running for Congress; Joann Flaminio, the first female president of the Boston Athletic Association; Elizabeth Perry

**"It's such a big year for women, and we're going forward on March 8 with something so positive, so forward-looking."**

Kathrine Switzer

"It's such a big year for women, and we're going forward on March 8 with something so positive, so forward-looking," she said. "We wanted to do something with powerful women doing great things."

Switzer will be joined

Tirrell, the first vice president of athletics at the American Heart Association; and Zahra Arabzada, an Afghan student behind "The Hijabi Runner" blog. Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey will speak at the beginning of the event.



Kathrine Switzer (center) pictured running the 2017 Boston Marathon, the 50th anniversary of her iconic run, with her husband Roger Robinson and Joann Flaminio. PROVIDED BY 261 FEARLESS

Through this panel, these women will share their success stories and advice for other women.

"One of the things I aim to ask them is to name the one key thing that you did that kind of gave you your fearlessness, that big moment," she said. "We must ask them this because 261 Fearless is about empowering women."

For Switzer, there's no hesitation on her moment.

"It wasn't running the Boston Marathon, it wasn't signing up — it was the moment the official attacked me," Switzer said. "I knew then that no matter what I had to finish the race. If I didn't, no one would believe women. They would think I was

there as a joke, a clown."

Switzer was 20 then, and she said finishing the race gave her "a vision for change." Her nonprofit has helped women around the world start their own running clubs.

"We're not about running fast, we're not about being competitive — we're about fearless women helping fearful women take the first step and change their lives," she said.

Switzer has been a role model to many, and she said she looks up to all the women on the panel.

"The woman from Afghanistan, oh, my God, to be able to get out of her country and run and have that sense of empowerment," she said.

"Maura Healey, Ayanna Pressley, women who put it out there, walking into the political arena where women need to walk and it's so sticky and murky and rough ... these women are leading the way."

Switzer considers Boston the birthplace of 261 Fearless, so it was natural to hold the International Women's Day panel there. Still, she wants the event to reach women all over the world.

"These women represent a broad spectrum of opportunity, inspiration ... across racial, religious and age barriers," she said. "There should be a piece of information there to inspire [any woman] to go forward no matter what."



KRISTIN TOUSSAINT  
kristin.toussaint@metro.us

Kathrine Switzer knows the moment that changed her life: when she was attacked on the Boston Marathon course by a race official who tried to rip her number off her shirt.

She had been the first woman to officially run the Boston Marathon, and since then, Switzer has helped women change their lives through her nonprofit 261 Fearless.