

For Immediate Release



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## City of Kentwood and Hanger Clinic Will Host Limb Loss Awareness 5K on Saturday, April 30

**Kentwood, Michigan, March 30, 2022** – The City of Kentwood is again partnering with [Hanger Clinic](#), to host the fourth Limb Loss Awareness 5K on Saturday, April 30, in recognition of Limb Loss and Limb Difference Awareness Month.

The all-ages and all-abilities event will begin with packet pickup at 9 a.m. at [Bowen Station Park](#), 4499 Bowen Blvd. SE, followed by the race at 10 a.m. The event seeks to increase awareness of limb loss, build community and raise funds for [Kentwood's adaptive recreation programs](#). These programs empower people with various disabilities to participate in athletic activities in an adapted way to allow for a safe and fun experience.

The accessible race [route](#) includes sections of the East-West and Paul Henry-Thornapple trails as well as a boardwalk. Participants will enjoy a scenic spring route filled with woodlands, wetlands and wildlife.

Online registration is available at [RunSignUp.com](#). Registration is \$30 through March 31 then increases to \$35 April 1-29. Race day registration is \$45. Participants will receive a long sleeve t-shirt and swag bag as part of their registration. Packet pickup will also be available in advance of the event at the Kentwood Activities Center, 355 48th St. SE, during business hours beginning at noon Wednesday, April 27.

The kid-friendly event will also include a 1-mile fun run for children ages 12 and younger at 11 a.m. along the same route. The kids race costs \$10 per child and includes a T-shirt and finisher ribbon. There is also a playground at the park for children to enjoy.

“Our Limb Loss Awareness 5K is more than a typical race,” said Katelyn Bush, Kentwood recreation program coordinator. “In addition to health and wellness, this run is focused on inclusivity, awareness, relationships and making a difference in our local community. We are thrilled this educational event has continued to grow in popularity since it began in 2018.”

Beth Lowman, a 35-year-old local woman who has experienced bilateral limb loss, will share her story at the event. Six years ago, Lowman was an active, athletic mom whose life was turned upside down when she developed dystonia, a disorder that causes muscles to involuntarily contract, in her left foot and ankle. She was unable to walk and, after several unsuccessful treatments, began to advocate for amputation. In February 2020, her left leg was amputated below the knee and she was able to walk for the first time in four years using a uniquely custom-designed bent-knee prosthesis fit by her prosthetic team at Hanger Clinic in Byron Center.

But after a fall in January 2021, Lowman developed dystonia in her right foot and ankle, and underwent the amputation of her right leg below the knee in July 2021. Despite the new challenge,

she continued to push forward, learning to walk again on two prosthetic feet this time. Though it has not been an easy journey, Lowman is excited to have the ability to move freely and looks forward to achieving her goal of walking across the finish line at the 5K. She advises all amputees to surround themselves with a support system and set goals.

“I continuously remind myself that although my life turned out differently than I planned, my life as an amputee is still vibrant and active,” Lowman said. “It is important to celebrate the small and large victories, because those are what makes life flourishing.

“I will forever see my life as a victory if I keep setting goals for myself and celebrating each step forward. The world wasn’t made for amputees, but it doesn’t mean we can’t flourish, cheer each other on and set the world ablaze with our successes!”

Phil Tower, a West Michigan radio personality, amputee and advocate for people with disabilities, will serve as the event’s DJ. Tower has more than 40 years of broadcasting experience and a background in the higher education and talent coaching space.

This year’s event will also include educational components and a peer support table. These resources will enable participants and attendees to learn more about amputation, prosthetics and orthotics. They also will connect individuals who have experienced limb loss or limb difference with one another, enabling them to provide support and build relationships. The event will also feature several informational booths from various sponsors. Event sponsors include: ACV Centers, Airway Mobility and Rehab, Buist Electric, Creative Mobility Group, Hunt 2 Heal, ITC Incorporated, Life Beyond Barriers Rehabilitation group, Mercury Labs, Inc., Muskegon Surgical Associates, New Wave Prosthetics, Proteor USA, Spectrum Health Inpatient Rehabilitation Center and Summit Labs LLC.

“We want people who are experiencing limb loss or limb difference to know they are not alone,” said Nikki Stoner, Hanger Clinic care coordinator. “There is a community here to welcome them and support them through their journey. This event gives us an opportunity to raise awareness and connect those experiencing limb loss and limb difference with resources and others in the community.”

Hanger Clinic, a local prosthetic and orthotic patient care provider, will also feature a memorial activity for Winter, the dolphin with a prosthetic tail who made her movie debut in “Dolphin Tale” on Sept. 23, 2011. Winter lost her tail after it became entangled in a crab trap in 2005. In 2006, Kevin Carroll, an expert prosthetist and vice president of prosthetics at Hanger Clinic, fit her with a prosthetic tail that allowed her to swim again.

Winter died in November 2021 following an intestinal abnormality. This year’s event will feature a card-making station to celebrate the dolphin’s life. The cards will be sent to the Clearwater Marine Aquarium in Florida where an ongoing memorial is offered to honor her legacy.

Race organizers are also seeking volunteers for the event. Those interested may sign up at [RunSignUp.com](http://RunSignUp.com). Race results will be displayed at Bowen Station Park and posted online shortly after the event. Four first-place awards will be given to the first adult men and women amputees and nonamputees who cross the finish line. The event is set to conclude at 1 p.m. More information is available at [kentwood.us/LimbLoss5K](http://kentwood.us/LimbLoss5K).

All profits from the event will go toward improving and expanding the City of Kentwood’s adaptive recreation programs to encourage health and wellness, socialization and excellent quality of life for all. The programs – offered in collaboration with community partners – enable participants to enjoy the benefits that come with any athletic or recreational activity, such as a sense of camaraderie, improved confidence and new skills. To learn more about current offerings, visit [kentwood.us/adaptive](http://kentwood.us/adaptive).