

On the Ironman Coeur d'Alene Facebook page, Marsha Ward of Atlanta, Georgia, tells how a little help from IMCDA volunteers made the difference in helping her become an Ironman w/only seconds to spare:

I was one of the final finishers of this year's IMCDA. What an amazing day and experience--one of transformation and inspiration. When my back seized up on the run course and I could not walk or run upright, I had to transform my goal to just crossing the finish line in time. When I thought I couldn't go any further at mile 21, Kathy Chalich, one of the amazing volunteers, took over and told me I was going to be an Ironman. We walked through 2 aid stations before she passed me to the Staszewska mother and daughter who walked another mile with me--and I met the entire family--before Kathy came back to see me to the finish line personally. The Staszewskas promised to see me at the finish line and Kathy willed me on as time was winding down. At the last aid station Kathy conscripted Rob Randall, another volunteer extraordinaire, who went the last 1.5 miles with us. Rob held me on one side, while Kathy had the other as we picked up the pace to cover the distance in less than 20 minutes. My back hurt, but the 3 of us ran together--me doubled over with an increasingly seized up back. Because of Kathy's inspiration--to me, to the Staszewskas, to Rob--I successfully crossed the finish line and became an Ironman! She wouldn't let anyone quit, especially me! I'm glad to report that Kathy Chalick was awarded the IMCDA Volunteer of the Year Award--and she earned it. I had a great experience during the race, and the spectators and people of Coeur d'Alene are amazing, but the volunteers of IMCDA make this event something that is not duplicated anywhere else. Many thanks to the village that helped me become an Ironman! Marsha Ward #936