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Boston College Law School

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First-Year Student Will Carry the Torch

4/12/04—BC Law first-year student John Bauters entered the contest on a whim, taking no more than 10 minutes to fill out an online form he found on ESPN.com. He didn’t even remember doing it when he got the phone call a few weeks later telling him he’d won. “I almost hung up on her,” Bauters recalls. “I thought she was trying to sell me something.”

Now, as a result of that 10-minute essay, Bauters will be one of around 380 people who will carry the Olympic Torch across America in June.

What he found out from that phone call was that he had beaten out some seven or eight thousand people who had entered Samsung’s and ESPN’s online contest to carry the torch. The essay he wrote related the way he tries to live his own life to the story of the Olympic rings, the linking of the five continents, and the Olympic values of participation, brotherhood, and peace.

“I wrote about how -- having been blessed with a number of different gifts and talents -- I have taken those skills and shared them with people around the world, including work with abused children here in the U.S., teaching AIDS and leadership workshops in Africa, working at an orphanage in Chile and a year as a Red Cross Disaster Relief worker back here,” said Bauters. “It is my belief that by using our gifts to experience the heritage and diversity of culture, we continue to expand our education and have an obligation to celebrate those experiences by incorporating them into how we live, using them to educate others, pulling the world together through the common experience of the human condition.”

ESPN and Samsung selected 20 essay writers from the thousands of entries, and the winners were given all-expenses paid trips to one of four cities -- L.A., St. Louis, Atlanta or New York -- to run the torch through downtown New York on June 19th (Bauters will run in New York). There will be roughly 380 Americans who get to carry the torch this summer as it makes one day stops in 4 U.S. cities on its way from Sydney to Athens.

“It’s been my experience that as one person, I can make a difference in the world and that I continue to pursue this belief with the hopeful anticipation that my example will lead others to do the same,” Bauters said. “I said in my essay that I chose to attend law school after witnessing the many social needs of people throughout the world. My goal in attending law school is that these experiences will serve as both the motivation and focus of my studies so that someday I may return to many of the places I have already been with something new to share.”

Bauters’s latest project is one very close to his heart. He is currently getting ready to participate in the American Cancer Society’s Relay for Life, which will take place April 23-34 in Boston. Typically, people form teams of 12-15 and take turns walking the 20-24 hour event as a team, raising pledges for cancer research. Last year, Bauters walked the entire event alone. He’s planning to do it again this year.

And he’s dedicating his participation to his grandfather, who died of pancreatic cancer in February. He has already received over $1,500 in donations. Out of the around 500 participants he is currently setting the bar for fundraising for this event in Greater Boston.
For more on the ACS University Relay for Life, click here.

To visit Bauter’s ACS homepage or make a donation to his cause, click here.

**More about the Olympic Torch contest from Samsung.com:**

In honor of the return of the Games to Athens, the ATHENS 2004 Olympic Torch Relay will mark the first-ever truly global journey of the Olympic flame. For the first time ever, people around the world will have the opportunity to participate, experience, and celebrate the Olympic spirit- a chance to touch the light.

On March 25, 2004, as soon as it is ignited by the sun's ray in Olympia, Greece, the flame's global journey will commence. On June 3, its global journey will start in Sydney, the host city of the 2000 Olympic Games. The flame will travel through 34 cities in 27 countries over the course of five weeks. Inspired by the theme "Pass the flame, unite the world,” the flame will bring together communities worldwide in a global celebration of the Olympic values the Olympic spirit.

The Relay will travel to all the Summer Olympiad host cities since the modern Games began in 1896, as well as cities of special significance, including New York City, home of the United Nations, Brussels, European Union and Lausanne, Switzerland, home of the International Olympic movement. In addition, for the first time ever, the Olympic flame will visit Africa and South America. The relay will visit all continents represented by the colors of five Olympic rings.

[Samsung’s Athens Website](https://www.samsung.com/us/olympic_torch)