

A team for people with mild dementia



For people living with dementia, regular physical and social activity can support cognitive function, wellbeing and quality of life

[See video ↗](#)

Planning

Six months before Copenhagen hosted the World Athletics Road Running Championships, Wonderful Copenhagen, Sparta Athletics & Running and the Danish Athletics Federation (DAF) came together to create Team Hverdagsmestre (Team Everyday Champions), a free running community for people living with early-stage dementia or mild cognitive impairment (MCI).

The societal initiative had a clear ambition to promote brain health and create benefits beyond the event by enabling people with dementia to stay physically active in a social setting. Also, the initiative wanted to demonstrate that, with the right support, people living with dementia can stay physically active and engage in their local sports communities.

From the outset, the running team was intentionally designed to continue beyond WRRRC Copenhagen 2026. Its long-term development is supported by key health, dementia and sports organisations, including Sport Event Denmark, Center for Demens (City of Copenhagen), the Danish Dementia Research Centre, DaneAge Association (Ældre Sagen), the Alzheimer's Association (Alzheimerforeningen) and Frederiksberg Health Centre.

KPIs of the project

- **Goal 1:** Continue the team through 2028
- **Goal 2:** Inspire three similar initiatives in Denmark or Europe by 2028

Dementia in Denmark

An estimated 103,000 people are living with dementia in Denmark, and this number is expected to increase to more than 146,000 by 2040, largely due to an ageing population (Danish Dementia Research Centre, 2026).

For people living with dementia or mild cognitive impairment (MCI), regular physical and social activity can support cognitive function, wellbeing and quality of life (Livingston et al., 2024).



Picture from WRRRC Copenhagen 2026

About Team Everyday Champions

- Two weekly coach-led training sessions were offered in Copenhagen, both indoors and outdoors.
- Sessions lasted 45–60 minutes and were adapted to accommodate both beginners and more experienced runners.
- Social connection was integrated into the sessions, with time before and after training to build relationships and strengthen the sense of community. Participants could stay for coffee and conversation, and relatives were welcome to join.

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Execution

Launched early 2026, the initiative provided 18 participants with free, coach-led training twice a week in the months leading up to WRRRC Copenhagen 2026. Participants trained for the 1 mile, 5 km or half marathon, creating an opportunity to prepare for and take part in the major running event alongside the wider running community.

To support replication beyond WRRRC Copenhagen 2026, key learnings from the project have been captured in a practical “Ways of doing” guide. The guide outlines recommendations and key considerations for establishing dementia-friendly running communities and will be shared with athletics clubs, sports federations, policymakers and other relevant organisations.

Evaluation

Overall, the project demonstrated how a major event can provide a platform for making running more inclusive.

- 18 people with mild dementia have trained with Team Everyday Champions in the six months leading up to WRRRC 2026. Besides, 5 of the runners have converted to other Sparta running teams. Six runners completed the 5 km and two ran the half marathon as part of WRRRC Copenhagen 2026
- Sparta Atletik & Løb has received 50,000 in funding from the City of Copenhagen (“Puljen for Ældrefællesskaber”) to support the initiative.
- The project has also generated wider sector engagement. It was presented at the Global

Running Conference 2026 (September 18) to more than 200 representatives from running organisers, federations, cities and commercial partners.

- On September 19, the initiative was presented to political leaders before the 5 km race: Jacob Mark (Minister for Children, Senior Citizens and Housing), Lars Gaardhøj (Chairman of the Regional Council) and Jens-Kristian Lütken (Copenhagen’s Mayor of Health and Care).

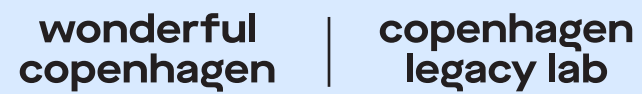
The project also received media attention, raising awareness of Team Everyday Champions and showing that people living with mild dementia can take part in sport and physical activity. By giving the participants, a visible role in the build up to and during the event, the project also helped challenge perceptions of what people living with dementia can participate in.



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Ways of doing - seven key learnings from the project

Ways of doing ➔



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