NEWS

"I feel like there's a lot of power in dreaming and believing."
NAOMI OSAKA JAPANESE TENNIS PLAYER

Yalies run 90-mile relay to Ground Zero on 25th anniversary of Sept. 11

BY HAILEY YOUNG
STAFF REPORTER

Shortly before 3 a.m. on Friday, eight students gathered for a group stretch in front of Yale's World War I memorial as they prepared for their leg of a 90-mile relay to Ground Zero.

The Yale 9/11 Memorial Relay, organized by Gabe Sachs '28 and Duncan Kilbride '28, took place on the 25th anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks and brought together 32 runners stationed throughout Connecticut, Westchester County and Manhattan before reaching the site of the Twin Towers. The roughly 16-hour relay also set out to raise funds for the National September 11 Memorial and Museum, exceeding its original goal of $5,000 with $7,425 amassed as of Sunday.

"We're the generation born in the immediate aftermath of 9/11," Sachs said in a phone interview. "To a certain extent, as we come of age, the baton is passed to us now to try to carry the memory of those who have died forward and to remember them."

At Friday's relay journey, an American flag served as the baton, moving continuously from each leg of runners throughout the journey. A Yale banner with the names of the nine Yale alumni killed in the attacks was also carried alongside each group of participants.

"We added the banner to make it a little bit more personal to Yale and to really get that connection to the student body and to the wider Yale community," Kilbride said in a phone interview. "We wanted to make it a unique Yale event instead of just a conventional, traditional relay race."

The idea for the relay emerged first in early August, Sachs said, when the two students began thinking about how students could mark the 25th anniversary.

As co-presidents of the Yale Ultramarathon Student Organization, Sachs and Kilbride devised an initial idea of running the entire distance of New Haven to New York, Sachs said. But instead, they decided to divide the route into nine legs of roughly 10 miles each to allow more members of the Yale community to participate in a "collective act of remembrance," Sachs said.

Before the run started, Sachs and Kilbride recruited volunteers, onboarded participants and mapped the route to ensure its safety and feasibility, Sachs said. On Friday, many volunteers ran more than one leg, with one even running 40 of the 90 miles, the organizers said.

As the runners got closer to New York, Kilbride recalled, strangers along the route began to notice and cheer them on, with many donating on the spot to their cause. Once the runners reached the World Trade Center, a woman approached the group as they took a photograph with their flags, asking to look at the names, Kilbride said. She recognized Stacey Sanders '98 and told the runners that her best friend had previously been close with Sanders in school.

"That kind of solidified and put into focus why we were doing this," Sachs said. "These aren't just names — they're people, they're friends, they're colleagues, they're classmates. Obviously, they've passed away, but I don't think they really die unless you stop remembering them. It's important to keep remembering, saying their names, and remembering that they're people who others miss."

Sachs and Kilbride are members of Yale's Naval Reserve Officers' Training Corps, which they said shaped their understanding of the anniversary and reflections on those who came before them in serving the nation.

Kilbride also said the relay reminded him that young Americans should take on events that can "do a lot of good in the world" no matter how ambitious they seem at first, recalling how organizing a 90-mile relay seemed like a "gargantuan task" at first.

The National September 11 Museum and Memorial, to which the relay's funds will be donated, opened on the tenth anniversary of the attacks.

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COURTESY OF GABE SACHS
More than 30 runners completed a 90-mile relay from Beinecke Plaza to the site of the Twin Towers on Friday, the 25th anniversary of the terrorist attacks, raising over $7,000 for the National September 11 Memorial and Museum.

First campus Turning Point USA event nods to Charlie Kirk's legacy

BY SARAH RIVAS
STAFF REPORTER

Yale's chapter of Turning Point USA invited Nick Shirley, an independent journalist and conservative influencer, on Thursday, the one-year anniversary of right-wing activist Charlie Kirk's assassination.

Turning Point USA was founded in 2012 by Kirk and his mentor, Bill Montgomery, to advocate for conservative principles on high school and college campuses across the United States. Kirk was killed in a shooting last September at a speaking event at a university in Utah, and Turning Point USA's Yale chapter was founded this spring.

During the off-the-record event, Shirley detailed his investigations into fraud and emphasized the importance of independent journalism, which he predicted would become increasingly popular in the future, according to audience members.

Carlos Perez '29, the president of Yale's TPUSA chapter, wrote in a text message to the News that he thought "there would be no better date to have our first event than on the one year anniversary of the tragedy that inspired us to start this group."

Nick Shirley rose to prominence in December 2025 when he posted a viral video exposing alleged widespread fraud at Somali-run child care centers in Minnesota and in March 2026 at registered hospices in California.

"I think Charlie was someone who stood for truth, and he wasn't afraid to back down," Shirley said in an interview. "He never backed down from evil, and he was eventually killed by evil for speaking out."

Perez wrote that he believed Shirley would inspire students as a young American who has used his freedom of speech for the "betterment of the country."

Ethan Savage '30 said in an interview that he was drawn to the event because he admires how Shirley represents "a voice of the American public," reporting outside the influence of major media outlets.

"He's just doing this for the love of the game, and I think the transparency is something very needed in America today," Savage said.

Shirley told the News he hoped to encourage students to be voices within their campus for "good and truth more than anything."

Laina Allen '29, the vice president of Yale College Republicans, said in an interview that Shirley's message of "pursuing what is true" is valuable for all college students, regardless of their position on the political spectrum.

Turning Point USA has over 800 college chapters, according to its website.

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SARAH RIVAS / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER
On the one-year anniversary of Charlie Kirk's assassination, Yale's chapter of Turning Point USA hosted its first public event with conservative influencer Nick Shirley.