



Houston Marathon Foundation Makes Running Matter

Nonprofit pledges \$100,000 of annual support for running-related initiatives

HOUSTON (Nov. 25, 2008) – Through its pledge to support people and organizations that make running matter, the Houston Marathon Foundation is enabling children and elite athletes alike to pursue their running goals.

Many of those runners, from the inner-city streets of Houston to the distance-running training grounds of Arizona, will head to the starting line on race weekend in January for the 37th edition of the Chevron Houston Marathon and its companion races.

The Houston Marathon Foundation's grant program provides funding to Houston-area organizations and national groups to encourage the development of running-related initiatives that promote health and fitness. An inaugural fiscal-year budget of \$100,000 is earmarked to support the advancement of running as part of a balanced, healthy lifestyle.

One of the initial recipients of a Houston Marathon Foundation grant is Chavez High School on Houston's eastside. The foundation has provided funding to the inner-city school for running shoes, transportation to allow students to participate in running events, and more than 100 complimentary registrations for the 2009 Chevron Houston Marathon, Aramco Houston Half Marathon and EP5K.

"The foundation's support of Chavez High School enables dozens of students to take part in a structured running program and set a goal to participate in one of the Houston Marathon events," said foundation Chairman Madeline Bunch. "Running is an excellent outlet for young people to stay active, improve their health and challenge themselves."

In addition to its support of Chavez, the marathon foundation has provided a grant to the Greater Houston chapter of Girls on the Run – a nonprofit prevention program for girls in grades three through eight. The organization utilizes running to help fulfill its mission of educating and preparing girls for a lifetime of self-respect and healthy living.

Girls on the Run is using the foundation grant to help fund its after-school program, which combines training for a 5K event with healthy-living education.

"The Houston Marathon is such an important part of the Houston running community, and we are very pleased to have the generous support of its foundation," said Mary T Callahan, co-founder of Girls on the Run of Greater Houston. "Our programs instill self-esteem and strong values through health education, life-skills development, mentoring relationships, and physical training – all of which are accomplished through a collaboration with girls and their parents, schools, volunteers, staff, and with the help of the Houston Marathon Foundation."

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On a national level, the Houston Marathon Foundation is supporting organizations focused on developing the next crop of American distance-running stars. The foundation is a sponsor of the USA Distance Project, a targeted USA Track & Field program to advance elite running in America through the support of group training centers and up-and-coming athletes.

The foundation is also backing McMillan*Elite*, a grassroots post-collegiate running team based in Flagstaff, Ariz. under the direction of Coach Greg McMillan. Through a unique, nonprofit structure, the team offers emerging elite runners an ideal training environment, combined with the necessary support to achieve success in distance running.

Contributions from the foundation help defray the cost of training and medical expenses for several members of the team, six of which are scheduled to run in the Chevron Houston Marathon or Aramco Houston Half Marathon in 2009.

“We rely heavily on the contributions of sponsors to fund our program and allow our athletes to focus on running,” said McMillan. “It’s often difficult for runners coming out of college to pursue a career in distance running and make ends meet. Through our program and the assistance of sponsors, we are able to give runners the opportunity to continue to develop their talents.”

About the Houston Marathon Foundation

Established in 2007, the Houston Marathon Foundation’s is to support the advancement of running as an element of a balanced, healthy lifestyle in the Houston community and nationally. The Houston Marathon Foundation, a 501 (C)(3) organization, supports people, projects and ideas that promote an understanding of, access to and/or participation in running as part of a physical-fitness regimen.

The foundation also provides grants for innovative thinking and research in the creation of running-related programs that lead to effective community-based health initiatives. The 37th running of Chevron Houston Marathon, and companion races, is scheduled for January 18, 2009.

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