



# ROAD RUNNERS CLUB OF AMERICA

## STRATEGIC PLAN AND OBJECTIVES

### 2009-2019

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. Introduction
- II. Methodology
- III. RRCA Statement of Purpose (Mission, Vision & Values)
- IV. RRCA Strategic Direction
  - Responsible Growth
  - 10 Strategic Goals for 2018
- V. RRCA Short and Long Term Operational Objectives
  - RRCA Constituents
  - Responsible Growth Objectives
  - **Recommendations for Operational Improvements over 3 - 5 Years**
- VI. Plan for Implementation
  - Ranking of Organizational Priorities
  - Fundraising
  - Developing Annual Operating Plans and Budget
  - Organizational Structure
  - Metrics and Measurements for Assessing Success

## I. INTRODUCTION

An important result from our August 2008 board meeting was the unanimous consensus that it was time to embark on the task of developing a strategic plan for the organization. President Brent Ayer appointed the following individuals to serve on the Strategic Planning Task Force: David Cotter (chair, RRCA Vice President), Jean Knaack (Executive Director), Mitch Garner (Eastern Region Director), Mark Grandonico (Central Region Director), Kelly Richards (N. Texas State Rep), John Devitt (Montana State Rep), Bee McLeod (Past RRCA President), Marlene Atwood (Former Georgia State Rep), Dan Edwards (Tidewater Striders' Treasurer), and Lisa Paige (Secretary and former CO State Rep).

Before the RRCA Strategic Plan can be outlined, it is important for members to understand what a strategic plan is and what it is not. In general terms, the focus of a strategic plan is based on the overall direction and performance of the organization, while a business or operating plan is usually focused on addressing specific areas related to programs or services that are a part of the organization.

Strategic planning and operational planning involve two different types of thinking. Strategic plans are fundamental, directional, and over-arching (the primary focus of the organization to best achieve its mission). Operational decisions affect the day-to-day implementation of programs and services that support the strategic direction or plan for the organization.



# **ROAD RUNNERS CLUB OF AMERICA STRATEGIC PLAN AND OBJECTIVES 2009-2019**

As the Strategic Planning Task Force found during their discussions, strategic planning and operational planning tends to overlap. However, it is important to be clear that strategic plans outline core strategies while operating to best achieve its mission). Operational decisions affect the day-to-day implementation of programs and services that support the strategic direction or plan for the organization.

As the Strategic Planning Task Force found during their discussions, strategic planning and operational planning tends to overlap. However, it is important to be clear that strategic plans outline core strategies while operating plans, which may contain both long-term (3-5+ years) and short-term (1-3 years) objectives, outline specific action items and desired outcomes. Both strategic planning and operational planning are important and need to be done well by the organization.

This document will outline the Strategic Direction for the RRCA over the next ten years, and will also outline recommendations for long-term and short-term operational plans. It is important to note that the Strategic Planning Task Force recommends that the RRCA Board of Directors continue the established practice of documenting and approving annual objectives that are tied to an annual operating budget. This annual exercise will help the organization achieve the long-term operational plans and strategic direction for the RRCA.

## **II. METHODOLOGY**

The process for developing this plan involved a 360-degree analysis of the organization starting with priority rankings from the Board of Directors outlined in early 2008 all the way down to a survey of our household members. The Task Force outlined the organization's constituents (or membership base) and used this outline to determine how best to survey the end users of our programs and services. We also used this list to help guide us through discussions about designing programs and services that meet the needs of our constituents.

The Task Force conducted two surveys to collect important baseline data about the organization, and to re-affirm or change assumptions developed from the last membership survey conducted in 2006. The first survey was designed for the club and event members of the organization, and we received 400 responses. The second survey was designed to collect data from our household membership (members of running clubs), and we received over 3000 responses.

This compelling information was coupled with a series of informative conference calls, numerous working documents that Task Force members commented on, email discussions, and an in-person retreat of the Board of Directors to finalize the Strategic Plan. The plan that follows is a "living document" that will guide and direct the work of the organization over the next decade.



# ROAD RUNNERS CLUB OF AMERICA STRATEGIC PLAN AND OBJECTIVES 2009-2019

## **III. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

### **RRCA Mission Statement**

The Road Runners Club of America is the national association of running clubs, running events, and runners dedicated to promoting running\* as a competitive sport and as healthy exercise. The RRCA's mission is to represent and promote the common interests of its member clubs, events, and individual runners through education, leadership, programs and other services.

### **RRCA Organizational Vision**

The Road Runners Club of America is the leading national organization dedicated to promoting the development and growth of running clubs, running events, and supporting the interests of recreational runners throughout the country. The RRCA strives to provide quality programming that can be replicated throughout the country by member clubs from small towns to large cities. These programs promote and support running and runners at all stages in life. The RRCA is dedicated to providing the running community with educational information and programs that will keep them safe, healthy, and informed. Furthermore, the RRCA strives to promote excellence in nonprofit management by providing services, benefits, and regular communication that supports this vision.

### **The RRCA values:**

- Running, runners, and the promotion of running as a healthy lifestyle choice
- The strength and support of its network of grassroots members and volunteers, and as such, we strive to maintain positive relations with all of our members
- Diversity in its member clubs and encourages all clubs to maintain an enjoyable atmosphere for all members
- The promotion of safety for all runners and the development and enforcement of laws and infrastructure that protects runners' safety
- Running as a competitive sport and we support the Zero Tolerance Policy developed by USA Track & Field for the use of performance enhancing drugs in the sport
- The participation of people who support the sport of running
- The financial contributions and support of members, sponsors, volunteers, and donors to the organization
- Good communication with its members and the running community as a whole
- Prudent financial management that enables the organization to achieve its mission while ensuring adequate cash reserves
- Strong relationships with national and local media that cover the sport of running and running as a healthy lifestyle choice

\* The RRCA uses the term "running" as a catch all word that encompasses the broad spectrum of "running" in the United States including competitive running, jogging, fitness walking, race walking, and wheelchair fitness on roads, trails, and tracks.



# ROAD RUNNERS CLUB OF AMERICA STRATEGIC PLAN AND OBJECTIVES 2009-2019

## **IV. RRCA STRATEGIC DIRECTION**

### **Responsible Growth:**

The RRCA is a grassroots organization. But what does this mean? In reality, it means different things to different people, as there is no legal definition for the term grassroots as it relates to nonprofit organizations. However, academia has attempted to provide some framework for the term “grassroots.”

According to Jo Anne Schnieder, a Sociology professor at Catholic University, “Grassroots generally refers to local people working together or organizing to find solutions to problems in their communities. Grassroots organizations are often contrasted with organizations founded by outsiders.”

Based on the general term “grassroots,” the RRCA is a grassroots organization. The RRCA is a national association of clubs and events, and our national office does not organize these entities locally. Organization of running clubs and events is the responsibility of local people. The RRCA in turn provides services, benefits & programs to support the grassroots (locally organized) clubs and events. We do not dictate management or operations to our members, but we do provide guidelines and guidance on best practices. This is what makes the RRCA a “grassroots” organization.

In support of our vision as a grassroots organization, the RRCA outlines the following strategies for responsible growth:

- The RRCA will engage in “responsible growth,” which we define as growth that is beneficial to our members and the running community at-large.
- The RRCA does not have a numerical growth goal for the number of running clubs, training programs, or event memberships to reach by 2019, because the RRCA is not directly responsible for the organization of these entities. We believe that for these entities to be successful, they must be organized by individuals in their communities with a vested interest in the success of the running club, training program, or event.
- The RRCA’s growth goals are service oriented as opposed to being financially or numerically motivated. The RRCA seeks to maintain and develop programs and services that current and potential members across our constituent base find valuable. We believe this investment in service delivery will maintain and continue to expand the existing membership base of the RRCA in the coming decade.
- The RRCA will seek to minimize growth or the unintended consequences of growth that are detrimental to the overall well being of the organization and its members as a whole. For example the RRCA will develop and improve a baseline criteria checklist for new running clubs, training programs, and events to ensure these organizations are meeting minimum standards of safe operation.
- The RRCA will continue to monitor the evolution of the delivery of running in the United States, and we will adapt to meet the needs of our members in order to sustain our membership base.



## **ROAD RUNNERS CLUB OF AMERICA STRATEGIC PLAN AND OBJECTIVES 2009-2019**

### **RRCA 10 Point Strategic Direction Over the Next 10 Years:**

- To be the leading authority on the organization of running clubs and training programs, and to be the largest association of grassroots running organizations in the United States that serve the needs of individual runners and make their safety a top priority.
- To have sufficient financial support from members, sponsors and individuals and to have leaders actively engaged in the solicitation of financial support to ensure organizational stability so the RRCA can be outward-focused in the promotion and support of running in the United States.
- To be the leading authority and resource for the establishment of new grassroots running organizations and training and education programs for runners, running coaches, race directors, and other special interests that emerge as priorities as the sport evolves.
- To have a major public profile and major name recognition as the leading voice for running clubs, events, and fitness runners in the United States, with increased use of emerging technologies as a means of communication to reach out to the public.
- To be a leading force in ensuring that participation in running remains constant or grows over the next decade through community support of event hosting, long term sustainability of local clubs, and maintenance and promotion of running as the most affordable form of regular exercise.
- To engage in best practices in organizational governance and management with the ability to adapt positively to a changing world along with generational leadership changes.
- To continually invest in and improve existing programs and services, develop new programs and services that are beneficial to the members, and to seek maximum participation in our programs and services by our members.
- To be a major, collaborative partner with health organizations and other running related organizations, but only as long as the partnerships enable the RRCA to achieve our strategic goals as an organization and for the sport of running.
- To integrate elite American runners into the RRCA's promotion of running in the United States in order to provide good role models for American youth runners.
- To work with members to actively engage the next generation of runners to participate in running clubs and events to ensure the long-term stability of the sport and to develop future leaders for the sport.



# ROAD RUNNERS CLUB OF AMERICA STRATEGIC PLAN AND OBJECTIVES 2009-2019

## V. RRCA SHORT AND LONG TERM OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

### RRCA Constituents:

As per the RRCA bylaws, the RRCA membership is diverse and encompasses a variety of running organizations from clubs, events, shoes stores, training programs, and more. The following is a basic outline of the RRCA membership breakdown that the Strategic Planning Task Force used to confirm that RRCA programs and services speak to the collective needs of the various entities while supporting the overall mission of the RRCA.

Membership Type	Description	Needs/Interests	Membership Breakdown
Nonprofit Running Club	Affiliate of the RRCA, is organized as a traditional nonprofit with a governing board. Conducts training runs and events. These clubs vary in size ranging from 20 members to 40,000+. May have nonprofit status with RRCA or on their own.	RRCA group exemption, insurance, beneficial programs & services, educational services, product or sponsorship support	70% of our membership
Nonprofit events	Affiliate of the RRCA, is organized as a traditional nonprofit. There is a mix of RRCA affiliate events and events with their own nonprofit status.	RRCA group exemption, insurance, beneficial programs & services, educational services, product or sponsorship support	19% of our membership
For Profit Training Program	Primarily organized as sole proprietor entities. For example an RRCA certified coach that conducts group training runs would be a for profit training program.	RRCA insurance, beneficial programs & services, educational services, product or sponsorship support	3% of our membership
Running Shoe Stores	Group runs organized through a running shoe store. The runs are typically free of charge so they are slightly different from for profit training programs.	RRCA insurance, beneficial programs & services, educational services, product or sponsorship support	4% of our membership
For profit events	Events organized by an individual or as an LLC., private business, shoe store, etc.	RRCA insurance, beneficial programs & services, educational services, product or sponsorship support	4% of our membership
Umbrella Organizations	Organizations that serve a group of entities. For example, the Houston Area Road Runners Association (HARRA). Pro-Road Race Organization (PRRO). These organizations may or may not take advantage of RRCA group exemption. Other examples include NGBs like USATF, Or National Association of Sports Commissions (NASC).	RRCA group exemption, insurance, beneficial programs & services, educational services, product or sponsorship support	Fractional percentage of the membership
Large Corporations	Corporate members such as New Balance, Puma etc.	Marketing opportunities with individual runners	Fractional percentage of the membership
Small Companies	Companies that are running focused such as t-shirt companies, award companies, etc.	Marketing opportunities with running club and event leaders as well as individual runners depending on the product	Fractional percentage of the membership
Individual Members	Individuals that may or may not belong to a club but are interested in having an allegiance/affinity with the RRCA.	Connection with the RRCA. Interested in receiving email or mailed communications	Fractional percentage of the membership
Associate Members	Nonprofit organizations that have a fitness focus but are not a running club. These are organizations like the American Heart Association, Sporting Goods Manufacturing Association (SGMA), American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM)	Connection with the RRCA. Interested in receiving email or mailed communication.	Fractional percentage of the membership



## ROAD RUNNERS CLUB OF AMERICA STRATEGIC PLAN AND OBJECTIVES 2009-2019

### Responsible Growth Objectives Through 2014:

- **Membership Retention:** Retain membership levels. We recommend a zero percentage loss rate, which means that we see our members renew year after year without “going out of business.” We realize that clubs become inactive from time to time, but these will be balanced out with new clubs that are formed to result in a “zero percentage loss.” While we do not totally control club level membership, through our efforts to promote membership in a running club, we hope to also see a zero percent loss meaning new members are recruited as other members become inactive.
- **Household Growth for Running Clubs:** Responsible growth for the RRCA will emphasize growth in the membership of local running clubs. This emphasis is consistent with our value statements and will help to focus strategy on the development of programs and services that seek to assist the clubs with marketing and membership retention and management and governance of their clubs. RRCA growth will come from increased numbers of individuals and families that are members of a local RRCA club. There would be an opportunity to provide additional services to help clubs manage their growth such as the Active membership module.

Over the next 3 to 5 years the RRCA will invest money in a promotional campaign encouraging people to join a local running club. This promotional campaign will include advertising in print media and on websites, articles in health and fitness publications, participation in large race expos, and other objectives developed annually. This effort ties into our strategy to maintain the average age of club members over the next ten years.

- **RRCA Nonprofit Running Club Membership Growth:** As outlined in the constituents’ matrix, the core of the RRCA membership remains nonprofit running clubs. The RRCA will engage in managed growth by adding new nonprofit running clubs using a team approach between the State Reps and the National Office (Membership Director). These groups may have their own nonprofit status or elect to utilize the RRCA group exemption.

The National Office will work with the State Reps to ensure that new clubs are formed according to our guidelines, and that they operate their clubs in a safe manner. So intense educational efforts with new members will be a priority for both the National Office and State Reps. The RRCA will work with the State Reps to develop a 3-year strategy to identify communities with no running clubs and send information to Park & Rec. departments, YMCA’s, etc about the benefits of starting a local running club.

- **Event Member Growth:** The goal of the RRCA is to support clubs hosting events by providing insurance and strategic partnerships that can assist local race directors. The RRCA should also encourage the nonprofit model for event management and continue to engage them in programs such as the National Championships. By outlining the benefits of organizing as a nonprofit event, the RRCA will work to maintain the integrity of the sport by having events be mission driven as opposed to profit driven.

The nature of race management has changed dramatically over the last 20 years. We have seen a shift from nonprofit race organizations to for-profit race directing companies, which are growing in numbers. This poses a unique challenge for their inclusion in the RRCA insurance program. By 2010 we will develop a system for better assessing member dues for these members and supplying a comparable insurance program for for-profit race directing



## ROAD RUNNERS CLUB OF AMERICA STRATEGIC PLAN AND OBJECTIVES 2009-2019

### Responsible Growth Objectives Through 2014 (Continued)

Charity events, 5K fundraisers, etc. continue to grow as well. As we learned in 2007, many clubs were “helping” local charities put on events, but they were not “club managed/owned” events, and they were not covered by the club’s insurance. The relationship with the clubs and the charity events created a growth opportunity as the clubs instructed these charity events to purchase event insurance from the RRCA. Thus it was a win/win/win. The charity event was insured, they had the help of the local club, and the RRCA benefited from the membership. This is an ideal event growth situation for the RRCA on the small event member side.

To help manage the increasing numbers of low quality races, the RRCA will require NEW events to attest to the fact that they have read our *Guidelines for Safer Road Races* and agree to abide by these guidelines. The *Guidelines for Safer Road Races* will be reviewed bi-annually and updated as needed with lessons learned in best practices for race management.

- **For-Profit Membership Growth:** Most for-profit clubs are either training programs or running shoe stores. As the number of RRCA Certified Coaches continues to grow, this membership segment will continue to grow. RRCA Certified Coaches that conduct for-profit training programs and receive liability insurance are categorized as for-profit clubs.
- **Corporate Supporter Growth:** The RRCA will engage companies involved with running in the RRCA Corporate Supporters Program. Developing relationships with corporations through the corporate supporters program will help connect them to the running clubs, events, and runners. It will also help serve as a basis for the establishment of more sponsorship and programmatic investments in the RRCA by these members

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OPERATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS OVER 3 - 5 YEARS

While the goal of a strategic plan is to outline the overarching organizational direction over a period of time, we believe it is also important to include some recommendations for operational improvements, or short to long-term operating objectives, that can be achieved over a 3 to 5 year period. These operating objectives are not all inclusive of things the RRCA could and/or should be doing over the next 3 to 5 years, but they highlight top priorities for the organization.

In 2005, the Board agreed to monitor performance based on the following established metrics:

- Communications
- Programs & Services
- Membership Recruitment & Retention
- Fundraising & Sponsorship
- Financial & Administrative

These metrics will be used to organize the recommendations for operational improvements over the next 3 to 5 years.



## ROAD RUNNERS CLUB OF AMERICA STRATEGIC PLAN AND OBJECTIVES 2009-2019

### Communications:

Based on the RRCA Constituents' Matrix, the organization speaks to a variety of people with varying needs for content and frequency of information. The RRCA seeks to meet these needs by providing information to members in a variety of formats and with a variety of content.

**Website:** At the cornerstone of the RRCA Communication Strategy is [www.RRCA.org](http://www.RRCA.org).

- The RRCA needs to ensure that the website is up to date, well organized, and with content that is useful for the end users of the website.
- Over the next three years the RRCA needs to improve the system for posting events on the RRCA calendar and have this tie in with the event information we collect during the renewal process. This will help develop one of the most robust calendars in the country as well as having data about participation in the events.
- Based on the Runners Survey, the RRCA needs to continue to find ways to drive people to the website such as periodic emails from Constant Contact to the household membership.
- The website was re-designed in 2006. The Board should invest funds every 4 to 5 years to re-design the look of the website within the bounds of the RRCA corporate image.

**Publications:** The RRCA needs to maintain and build upon the quality of its publications:

- *Inside Track* should be seen as the academic journal for club management and will utilize the Road Race Management partnership for event management expertise. This will continue to be an important publication for sharing information about RRCA programs and services.
- Through the Running Network sponsorship, the RRCA has the opportunity to co-produce a hard copy publication that will be mailed to the RRCA household membership. The RRCA needs to work with Running Network to ensure that the quality of the content in the publication and to keep advertisers engaged in supporting the effort to ensure long-term viability. The benefit of this relationship is the RRCA is working with a professional publisher as opposed to producing the publication "in-house". This sponsorship should help make the RRCA a household name with the household members of the organization. It is an opportunity to promote the benefits of being actively involved in a running club. We will also have the opportunity to drive traffic to our website and to encourage people to join our email list.
- The RRCA needs to update the RRCA Handbook and make it an online publication that is easily accessible for members. The Handbook needs to evolve into the Club Management website portal by the end of 2012.

**RRCA Marketing & Outreach:** The RRCA has a stated strategic objective to have a major public profile in the running community, to that end, the RRCA will engage in the following objectives over the next 3 years, and then outline needed improvements after that time.

- The RRCA staff will develop a media working group that writes RRCA focused articles for inclusion in RRCA publications, and local, regional and national media outlets. Members of the group will call radio stations to talk about running and they will work with local TV stations to get spots about local running. The RRCA will also work with members to collect special interest stories about their local clubs for inclusion in RRCA publications and for posting on the RRCA News in a regular posting called Running Around the Nation.



# ROAD RUNNERS CLUB OF AMERICA STRATEGIC PLAN AND OBJECTIVES 2009-2019

## RRCA Marketing & Outreach Continued:

- Starting in 2009 and continuing over a three-year period, the RRCA will invest funds in a promotional campaign designed to promote joining a local running club called “Join A Club” Campaign. This will help spread the RRCA name as well as provide marketing value to our members. Success should be examined after the 3-year period, at which point the Board will determine continued investment in this effort.
- The RRCA will create more ads, fact sheets, and articles that clubs can download from the RRCA website and include their newsletters.
- The RRCA will create press release templates (race announcement, elite field, special interest, disaster or death, post race release, etc.) that running clubs can download, personalize and circulate to local media.
- The RRCA will include advertising dollars in the annual budget for ads in running publications promoting programs that have a broad appeal to runners such as Run@Work Day, RRCA National Championships, etc.
- The RRCA will create a membership card that can be emailed to the household RRCA membership. This card could link to a private page where household members could get discounts for online purchases from corporate supporters.

## Programs & Services:

The RRCA has a suite of existing programs and services. Detailed information about RRCA programs and services can be found on our website at [www.RRCA.org](http://www.RRCA.org). To save space in this report, each program will not be explained in detail, however the following outlines some recommended improvements for existing programs and services. We also outline potential new programs and services to explore and implement over the next 3 to 5 years.

### Services

- Insurance (Liability, D&O, and equipment)
- Nonprofit Status
- Club & Event database listing
- Convention
- National Awards
- RRCA Partnerships – Online Services, etc.
- RRCA Promotion – News Syndication & Branding
- Resources for Clubs & Events
- State Representatives

### Programs

- Coaching Certification & Database
- Championship Program
- Kids Run the Nation
- Education & Advocacy
- Run@Work Day
- Personal Fitness Program
- Women’s Distance Festival

### Recommended New Initiatives

- Micro-finance Program for clubs
- Race Director Training Program
- Youth Coach/Program Director Training Program
- RRCA Leadership Institute
- Runner Friendly Community
- LDR Museum – Hall of Fame (virtual or traveling)
- Beginning Running Program in a Box



## ROAD RUNNERS CLUB OF AMERICA STRATEGIC PLAN AND OBJECTIVES 2009-2019

### Services:

Through the RRCA Communication efforts we hope to see a significant increase in the participation of various services such as the RRCA Convention, the RRCA national Awards nominations, and the increased use of RRCA branding at events and clubs. In addition the RRCA will:

- **Insurance** - Improve systems to maintain the integrity and success of the insurance programs. Explore new products beneficial to members such as timing company insurance, race director company coverage, etc. Make risk management a priority for all race directors. The RRCA Board should develop policies and procedures that outline the probation or removal of members that pose a significant threat to the overall well being of the organization – more specifically events/clubs that flagrantly disregard basic RRCA policies and create unnecessary risk exposure for the group insurance policies.
- **Nonprofit Status** – Maintain integrity of status with the IRS. Develop, as part of the Club Management website portal, more information on best practices in running a nonprofit running club.
- **National Awards** – Engage the running community at large in selecting some of the winners to increase the profile of the awards overall. For example, have a panel nominate several runners of the year or road races of the year and open voting for these awards up to the general running community to select the final winner. By allowing the running community at large to engage in the selection process, we can work towards achieving the goal of connecting elites runners with fitness runners.
- **RRCA Partnerships** – Engage in partnerships that further the mission of the RRCA and provide benefits to the clubs, events and household members. Create better presentation of these partnerships on the website similar to <http://triathlon.usoc.org/content/sponsors>. Explore partnerships with organizations that do not have a competitive interest with RRCA so the partnership will have better mutual benefit to each organization.
- **State Representatives** – The RRCA State Reps function is to serve as ambassadors for the RRCA at the state and local level. The RRCA needs to continue to develop tools to help the State Reps fulfill their role for the organization. In addition, the organization should continue to pursue funding to help these volunteers, and State Reps should achieve established performance expectations in order to receive financial support for convention attendance.

### Programs:

- **Coaching** – In 2006 the RRCA began offering continuing education for coaches. The coaches that participated in these classes will be recorded in a database and their CEC's will be tracked. After coaching for a period of time and with a certain number of CEC's these coaches may advance to an RRCA Coach Level-2 Certification. The level-2 certification requirements will be finalized by the end of 2009, and the first group of level-2 coaches may be eligible by 2011. All RRCA coaches will be asked to undergo a criminal background check as part of the program.



## ROAD RUNNERS CLUB OF AMERICA STRATEGIC PLAN AND OBJECTIVES 2009-2019

### Programs Continued:

- **Championship Program** – Over the next 3 years, the RRCA needs to engage more sponsorship support for the Championship program from race bags to numbers to Gatorade and more. Several initiatives were implemented in the last few years such as the Championship database, advertising for National Championship events in a running publication, and inclusion of the RRCA Championship buck slips in race bags. These items all increase the value of being an RRCA Championship, and the organization needs to further invest in these efforts. In addition, the Regional Championships need to standardize distances to match the National Championships. The RRCA needs to build on the fund established by the Cherry Blossom 10 Mile to develop an invitational structure for Regional Champs to attend National Championships. The RRCA should explore prize money for RRCA National Champions or develop a partnership with retailers to provide gift cards to the National Champions. To engage clubs, the RRCA should encourage and support the development of State, Regional & National Club Championships. The RRCA needs to continue to engage the State Reps and Regional Directors in this effort, but they also need to develop a program champion that can work with the National Office, State Reps, and Regional Directors to help coordinate a more cohesive effort for the program.
- **Kids Run the Nation** – The RRCA has a stated goal to see a Kids Run the Nation or youth running program in all grade schools in the United States by 2018. This goal will be achieved by active promotion of the Kids Run the Nation, our turnkey, youth running program. By 2010, the RRCA will have a Youth Program Director/Youth Coaching Certification program designed and implemented. The RRCA will develop a Personal Fitness Program geared towards kids as part of the Kids Run the Nation program.

The Kids Run the Nation Fund will be a fundraising priority. The goal is to have the KRN Fund be the “*United Way*” of youth running. The RRCA will develop a national fundraising campaign targeting foundations, individuals, clubs, events, manufacturers (Nike, Asics, etc.), shoe stores, etc. to increase the number of grants provided through the Fund.

- **Education & Advocacy** – First the RRCA will develop additional tip sheets like the *Guidelines for Leading a Group Run* and actively promote and encourage members to include them in newsletters or on their websites. As the Runners Survey identified, runners’ safety, access to safe roads & trails, and environmental quality were noted as top threats to the future of running. The RRCA will explore lobbying opportunities to serve as the voice of runners on Capital Hill during appropriations meetings for transportation and the EPA. The RRCA will develop a tip sheet on how local clubs can engage more effectively in local advocacy efforts.
- **Run@Work Day** – Over the next 3 years, the RRCA will continue to invest in the grassroots movement of Run@Work Day. Run@Work Day has proven to have great media interest over the last four years. It also allows the RRCA to promote running and walking as healthy exercise, and it allows the RRCA to showcase the importance of joining a running club. It also enables us to speak about a tiered approach to improving health: corporate (employer) support, getting adults active, setting an example to get youth active, and adopting a healthy lifestyle. Some objectives include: creating posters that can be shipped to R@W hosts to be hung in stores, offices, etc. The RRCA will pursue a major corporation to host a R@W Day event, and we will strive for a segment on the Today Show or Good Morning America about R@W Day. We will engage R@W Day champions (volunteers) at the state and regional level to help coordinate a cohesive promotional effort for R@W Day.



## ROAD RUNNERS CLUB OF AMERICA STRATEGIC PLAN AND OBJECTIVES 2009-2019

### Programs Continued:

- **Women's Distance Festival** – The WDF will evolve to be a listing of women's only races in the US. Pending corporate support for this program, it will develop into a limited series of sponsored events.

### Recommended New Initiatives:

- **Microfinance Program for Clubs:** Established in 2009 from a gift from Bee McLeod and Goody Tyler, the RRCA Microfinance Service will provide small annual loans (\$1000-\$5000) for a total of \$20,000 or up to 10 loans in the first year to qualifying nonprofit running clubs as determined by the loan selection panel. Specifically, clubs must be in good standing financially and with the RRCA, and they must have been in operation for at least two years. The purpose of the loans would be to assist clubs with purchasing capital assets such as timing clocks or a timing system.

The clubs will apply for the loans during a loan application period. Loans will be reviewed and granted by a loan selection panel appointed by the RRCA president. The panel will be co-chaired by Bee McLeod and Goody Tyler for a minimum of a 2-year period; the chairmanship role beyond that period will be determined jointly between the RRCA president and the Donor by the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2010. The Donor will not retain a voting majority on the panel.

The total annual loan amounts outstanding will be capped at \$20,000 a year. The terms of the loans will be established by the RRCA Board of Directors but will not exceed five years. No interest will be charged on the loans if the loan is repaid within a 12-month period of time. After 12 months, the loans will have an interest rate of 3% on the outstanding balance of the loan. Administrative costs for the program will not be paid for or reimbursed from these funds.

- **Youth Coach/Program Director Training Program** – The RRCA will develop a youth coaching certification/program director training program in partnership with an organization like the National Federation of State High School Associations or the Youth Sports Coaches Association, each of which already has a basic youth coaching certification in place but lack a running component for their programs. The goal of this program will be to train adults on effectively directing a youth running program.
- **Race Director Training Program** - Work with Road Race Management to develop a race director certification course based on Phil Stewarts book. This will be a joint partnership between the RRCA and RRM. Certification will be completely voluntary and not a requirement for insurance. The goal being that newer race directors will be interested in the course and seasoned directors can take their certification to local governments in an effort to get better treatment during a permitting process.
- **Beginning Running Program in a Box** – The RRCA will develop a turnkey program for clubs to adopt for beginning running programs. This includes the production of brochures on beginning running (gender neutral) that outline safe training concepts, injury prevention, race etiquette, etc. The program will link to the coaches program and the personal fitness program.



## ROAD RUNNERS CLUB OF AMERICA STRATEGIC PLAN AND OBJECTIVES 2009-2019

- **RRCA Leadership Institute** – The Leadership Institute would build on the Club College concept and Club College will become a part of this overall program initiative. The cornerstone of the Leadership Institute will be a website page/portal that has comprehensive information on starting and managing a running club. The RRCA will develop a speaker's bureau of seasoned club leaders and/or a listing of preferred RRCA subject experts. We will develop and host webinars on topics of interest to club leaders and/or post samples of seminars from RRCA conventions to educate and also entice people to attend the Convention. Partnerships like Ashworth, Ipico, Constant Contact and Active.com will be highlighted as tools for effectively managing a club's activities. The RRCA will develop a small matching grants program for clubs interested in sending a new club leader to the Convention to help fulfill the strategic plan of engaging the next generation into the RRCA.
- **Runner Friendly Community®** – The RRCA will develop the Runner Friendly Community® award (we have the trademark already reserved). We will create stringent criteria that allow communities and clubs to use the label RRCA Runner Friendly Community. We will create an RFC promotional logo and develop an application process for the designation. Then we will award plaques to local clubs and city governments that earn RFC recognition. A club and local community will work together to apply for the award. Through this program there are opportunities to send out press releases when new RFCs are named by the RRCA. We will develop the criteria during 2009 and launch the initiative in 2010 with the first community being named by the end of 2010.

Over the next 3 to 5 years the president and executive directors will forge relationships with the National Association of Sports Commission, the US Chamber of Commerce, the US Conference of Mayors, and other groups that exist and make the decisions on what types of events a local municipality will support. The RRCA will work with experts to develop presentations to give at conventions for these groups or to email to leaders of these groups. Club leaders can also give these presentations at the local level. This will be an effort to get the word out about why running is good for a community and why supporting running on city streets is a positive thing. This will be the national effort for bringing running back to local communities and not increasingly restricting events to "enclosed/protected" areas such as parks. We will focus on co-utilization of roadways, case studies, statistics and development of seminars for national organization focused on economic development, etc.

- **Running Hall of Fame (virtual or traveling)** - This will be an effort for the nation's oldest national running organization to take the lead and own the documentation of the history of our sport and the RRCA. The RRCA needs to get bio's and photos for all RRCA Hall of Famers, photos & bios on all Roads Scholars, post Long Distance Log archives along with FOOTNOTES archive on website, conduct interviews with running luminaries. We will keep a living document of the memories and accomplishments of leaders in our sport (athletes, administrators, etc. – as told by them or people close to them). We will develop a traveling "Hall of Fame" that can be hosted by events with expos. This HOF may include photos and text printed on the large banners that could be placed in an expo booth or at various locations around an expo for people to look at. The banners could be shipped around easily from one event to another event.



## **ROAD RUNNERS CLUB OF AMERICA STRATEGIC PLAN AND OBJECTIVES 2009-2019**

### **VI. PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

#### **Ranking of Organizational Priorities:**

Each year the Board of Directors and RRCA staff will engage in ranking of organizational priorities for the coming years based on trends, membership needs, financial support, and furtherance of this strategic plan. To rank priorities the Board and Staff should engage the State Reps during the State Reps Session at the Annual Convention, the Staff should survey membership every 2 to 3 years, and the Board should engage in discussion about priorities at a board meeting prior to the creation of the annual operating objectives.

#### **Fundraising and Financial Support:**

Fundraising and financial support play a major factor in the success or failure of any nonprofit organization. The RRCA must, based on its own history, always maintain the long-term financial stability of the organization as a top priority. The Board and staff must always establish realistic annual income goals and work together to achieve the goals. Inflating income goals with out a realistic plan to cover expenses on paper is a dangerous practice that should be avoided. The Board needs to ensure 100% board giving to the RRCA and assist the National Office in fundraising efforts through letter writing campaigns and contacting sponsors or potential sponsors as directed by the Executive Director and/or President.

The RRCA should leverage strategic partnerships to help in the assistance of program and service delivery to help manage costs. The RRCA should always seek to find creative solutions by implementing the latest technology designed to maximize communication while minimizing costs.

The RRCA through this strategic plan must work with the running industry to ensure that their investment in the organization is money well spent. The RRCA must also work with sponsors to ensure that the sponsorship furthers this strategic plan.

#### **Developing Annual Operating Plans and Budget:**

The Strategic Planning Task Force recommends that the RRCA Board of Directors continue the established practice of documenting and approving annual objectives that are tied to an annual operating budget. The annual objectives and budget should reflect the ranked priorities of the organization and clearly outline new programs and/or enhanced programmatic improvements. This annual exercise will help the organization achieve the long-term operational plans and strategic direction for the RRCA and will also help the organization prioritize objectives based on income expectations.

#### **Organizational Structure:**

As outlined by the RRCA Bylaws, the Board of Directors is responsible for governance and oversight of the organization. Currently, the organization employs an executive director, a membership director and an office manager. The organization also utilizes independent contracts for items such as the website, coaching program, bookkeeping, etc. Volunteers make up the bulk of the RRCA workforce and are an essential component to our success.

Staffing an organization can be the largest expense in the budget. The Strategic Planning Task Force recommends that the RRCA maintain of a small staff and continue to utilize volunteers and independent contractors to assist with the development, implementation, and management of various program aspects under the direction of the Executive Director and Board of Directors.



## **ROAD RUNNERS CLUB OF AMERICA STRATEGIC PLAN AND OBJECTIVES 2009-2019**

### **Organizational Structure Continued:**

Paid staffing and independent contractor needs should be examined as part of the annual budgeting process.

The organization should also engage volunteers to help implement and manage program aspects. For example a Championship Program Coordinator would be a volunteer that helps coordinate the efforts between the Regional Directors, the National Championship selection committee, and the State Reps' championship responsibilities. A Run@Work Coordinator would help answer questions about planning local R@W day events. They would help circulate presses releases, call radio stations, approach TV outlets, etc. By engaging a volunteer work force in program aspects we can tap into their strengths and interests within the organization.

### **Metrics and Measurements for Assessing Operational Objectives:**

The Board should continue to use the following metrics for reporting on and assessing annual objectives. These metrics speak to the 10-point strategic direction for the organization over the next 10 years. Under each metric, the Board and Staff should outline annual measurable objectives and measure progress no less than three times a year.

- Communications
- Programs & Services
- Membership Recruitment & Retention
- Fundraising & Sponsorship
- Financial & Administrative

The Board should re-examine the strategic plan at intervals of 3, 5 and ten years. At the 3-year mark, many of the benchmarks outlined in this document or new objectives developed between 2009 and 2012 should have been achieved. By 2014, all RRCA programs and services should be robust and meeting the needs of the membership. The RRCA should have a governance structure that can adapt to changes but still remain focused on the strategic direction through 2019.