

2013 RRCA RUNNER FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES:

Chattanooga, TN – Chattanooga has all of the ingredients for an outstanding runner friendly community and one of its best assets is its citizens. Chattanooga residents take pride in their community and show their support of running through participation in for-profit and charity events as well as the creation and maintenance of the community's magnificent trail systems and parks. Chattanooga residents also support runners through training programs and clinics, many on a volunteer basis.

Over the past decade, the Chattanooga region has established a considerable reputation as a venue for many types of outdoor athletic activities. Local government entities have embraced running and walking events for the economic impact and as part of a strategy of marketing the city's healthy lifestyle to attract new businesses and residents. Ten years ago, the City of Chattanooga established Outdoor Chattanooga, a municipal division tasked with making outdoor recreation an attractive, healthy, and distinguishing lifestyle for Chattanooga's residents and visitor population.

The city's infrastructure is also remarkably runner friendly, with water fountains as well as community bathrooms or portable toilets along pedestrian networks. The pedestrian networks also include accessible parking, emergency phones, and lights that keep trails well illuminated. Furthermore, the community makes a tremendous effort to reclaim unused parcels to convert to uses supporting a healthy lifestyle. For instance, Enterprise South Nature Park is situated on 2800 wooded acres that were previously part of the Volunteer Army Ammunition Plant. Opened for free, public use by the Hamilton County government, the park offers miles of walking paths, bicycle paths, and off-road biking and running trails, including American with Disabilities Act accessible trails.

The Chattanooga Track Club (CTC) remains an important pillar of the Chattanooga running community. A key part of CTC's vision and mission centers on developing an appreciation of running among youth and families. The club's website, weekly e-news, and quarterly newsletter communicate information including training opportunities, events, race reviews, and results. In addition to offering discounted membership rates to students, the CTC works with local schools and universities to bring running events and programs to young runners and their families. For several years, the CTC has hosted the elementary cross country series, consisting of four fall races for 3rd, 4th and 5th graders, drawing over 600 students each year from public, private, parochial schools, and home school teams throughout the area.

Community leaders who provided support and letters of recommendation include Jim M. Coppinger, Hamilton County, TN Mayor; Sen. Bob Corker, R-TN; Cathleen J. Cooke, Superintendent of the Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park; Randy Whorton, Wild Trails Executive Director; Bill Gautie, Head Track and Cross Country Coach at the

University of Tennessee at Chattanooga and Chas Webb, President of the Chattanooga Track Club.

Sarasota, FL – Sarasota is home to the Sarasota Athletic Association, which submitted the application.

The community is also home to The Manasota Track Club (MTC) which submitted the application, along with other area clubs. The MTC was founded in 1975 and consistently has just under 600 members. As one of the strongest forces in our running community, MTC hosts 11 races as part of their racing series, including the annual Sarasota half marathon, and in 2012 hosted 17 sanctioned events and 10 summer beach runs. Local races often feature Sarasota middle school or high school students competing, a testament to the area's long-standing commitment strong of commitment to youth running. In fact, many of the local running coaches have been active in the community for more than two decades.

The Sarasota community offers hundreds of miles of trails and sidewalks that wind their way along the Gulf Coast and bayfront and in to the interior portion of Sarasota County, including Myakka River State Park, Legacy Trail, and Oscar Scherer State Park.

Sarasota has several business partners who rise early on Saturday morning to strategically place hydration stations along the popular training routes. Public works employees open public restrooms by 6:00 AM to accommodate runners and walkers. The City of Sarasota works closely with organizations to secure permits in a timely manner and is extraordinarily responsive on all requests. Local law enforcement officers are regulars at our running events, many of them runners themselves, but always cheering on our runners and supporting us by working or volunteering. Some of our local races are led by motorcycle officers and you always find officers aware of the situation.

Community leaders who provided support and letters of recommendation include Molly and David Jackson, Owners, New Balance Sarasota & University Park; Joseph A. Barbetta, Sarasota County Commissioner; and Patti Brustad, President, Manasota Track Club.

Kalamazoo, MI – Kalamazoo represents community collaboration at its finest, with running event and program organizers, businesses and municipalities, schools systems and non-profit organizations striving together in partnership to grow the sport of running. It is this spirit of collaboration that has helped thousands of citizens within the community embrace a healthy life style through the support.

Kalamazoo Area Runners (KAR) is the largest RRCA Running Club in the State of Michigan with more than 1,200 members and works extensively with local government, organizing large scale races in both the City of Kalamazoo including the Kalamazoo Klassic, Run Through the Lights, and the City of Portage Winter Blast Half Marathon. KAR works with local schools and

colleges/universities on training programs and events, including the Turkey Trot Time Prediction Run at Portage West Middle School and the Fast Track 5k/10k Training Program at Western Michigan University. Businesses, schools and other nonprofit organizations grant use of their facilities for KAR's training programs.

The City of Kalamazoo and City of Portage work closely with Kalamazoo Area Runners and other race organizers to host running events throughout Kalamazoo County. The City of Portage is a formal partner with the Kalamazoo Area Runners in hosting the Winter Blast Half Marathon & 5k, a major event throughout the city streets and trails of Portage. Both the City of Kalamazoo and the City of Portage work closely with race organizers on coordinating venues, routes, police, road closures and operations planning. Kalamazoo is home to the Kalamazoo Marathon and Borgess Run for the Health of It, a major community event that collaborates heavily with businesses, organizations and local government. It attracted approximately 8,500 race participants and 900+ to its Borgess Run Camp Training Program in 2013 and is supported by more than 75 sponsors.

Community leaders who provided support and letters of recommendation include Bonnie Sexton and Joy Mills, President and Executive Director of the Kalamazoo Road Runners; Peter J. Strazdas, Mayor of Portage; Blaine Lam, Janeen Docsa and Chris Lampen-Crowell, Race Co-Directors of the Kalamazoo Marathon/Borgess Run for the Health of It, David C. Maturen, Peter Battani, Linda Vail; Kalamazoo County Government Leaders and Ron Kitchen, Southwest Michigan First.

South Lake, FL – In the gentle sloping hills of South Lake, runners of all ages, health, and fitness abilities find a community whose roots in health, wellness and running run deep. Some of the very best and most desirable running assets, facilities, and races, including the Lake Mineola Half Marathon, are found in South Lake. The community's culture of running and its tangible benefits have given rise to enumerable investments into a network of year round paths, trails, and sidewalks adorned with mileage markers, shaded canopies, clean restrooms, ample parking, safe cross walks and shared space lanes. In fact, runners are able to complete more than 20 miles on South Lake's pedestrian network before it ends.

Local running clubs such as the South Lake Striders have charitable arms that help support existing youth charities within South Lake. Additionally, the local running clubs collaborate with local government, schools both public and private along with the business community to promote the tangible health and wellness benefits of running. The local clubs have a long-standing relationship with the community, stakeholders, and leaders and collaborate and a spirit of cooperation to fulfill the running needs of the community.

The hallmark of the South Lake community is a local government that understands the quality of life for the South Lake community which is inextricably intertwined with the health status. Better health has a direct impact on the health of employees, retirees, students and families. The local

government in coordination with South Lake Hospital, health care professionals, residents, business leaders, educator and students has taken this as a leadership opportunity. One of the focal points of this end is the support from local government for running, runners, running events and related activities. Given the interest within the community for outdoor endurance pursuits it has been a natural fit for our local government to integrate running, runners, running events and related activities into their considerations for planning, land use, improving funding and other decisions.

Community leaders who provided support and letters of recommendation include Dr. Cheryl Decker Doc's In Ergent Care, John Moore President South Lake Hospital, Kim Grogan Gear For MultiSport Owner, Sean Parks Lake County Commissioner, Ken Brauman Pure Athletics Head Manager Men's Track and Field