



Women Set the Pace: First-ever Toronto half marathon exclusively for women slated for Spring 2009

(September 26, 2008 - Toronto, ON) - A new era in running dawns next spring when a female runner will be the first across the finish line at a brand-new race created by women, for women.

The Toronto Women's Half Marathon (TWHM) and 5K race (www.TOwomenshalf.com) will take place on Sunday May 31, 2009 in the picturesque Sunnybrook Park system, with the start and finish at Wilket Creek Park.

Created by Cory Freedman (www.maxvo2inc.com), an experienced event strategist and lifelong running enthusiast whose personal race participation includes three Ironman triathlon finishes, numerous marathons and adventure races, the TWHM fills a much-needed gap for the growing number of women who run.

"Over the years, competitive female runners have confided that regardless of how well they run, if it's in a mixed gender race they still feel like they are part of the 'chase' group. Women who enjoy running as a recreational or bonding activity have expressed a desire to participate in an event that's female-focused and supportive of the fun and social aspect of running. With the Toronto Women's Half Marathon and 5K race, we've got something that satisfies both perspectives and that's why it's such an important addition to the region's existing race calendar", says Freedman.

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Fastest growing segment of runners

Women are enthusiastically embracing running – and power walking - as a fitness and social activity. Today, close to 60% of all finishers in the GTA’s existing half marathons – including the Scotiabank Waterfront event - are women, and the number of ‘learn to run’ groups and clinics for female participants are expanding by double digits annually.

Special event, special activities

Expected to quickly reach its inaugural year capacity of 1,000 half-marathoners and 300 5K participants, the event will provide a unique experience for female competitive, recreational and new runners. As a note, walkers are welcome to participate in either the half marathon or the 5K, pending their ability to reach the finish line finish within the designated 3:30 time limit.

In addition to the traditional on-route race features such as musical interludes and hydration stations, women will be treated to a “chocolate aid” station, see enthusiastic firefighters handing out water and get refreshed running under the misting station. Every participant will receive a long-sleeved Mizuno technical shirt and a unique finisher memento. The post-event party will include food, entertainment and much-needed massages.

The buzz is growing

The TWHM web site has been operational for less than a month and registration is brisk. Already 35% of the spaces for the half marathon have been filled and excitement is building for the 5K. Initial interest from the corporate sector is also underway, with both Mizuno and the Running Room already signed on as sponsors.

“We’re thrilled with the excitement already building about this event among participants and the corporate sector. It’s a great fit for companies who want to connect with active, community-oriented women and support an event that celebrates the power of female role models. We expect that we’ll have many additional A-list sponsors to announce soon”, says Freedman.

Fun for everyone

More than 100 volunteers will be needed to ensure the event is a success so women who choose not to run or men who want to show their support can still participate in this one-of-a-kind event. Training for all positions will be provided and volunteers will take home a special commemorative Mizuno technical shirt, along with some memories of a fun-filled day. More information is available on the website.

Charitable partner

The TWHM and its participants will also be raising funds to support the work of the Pediatric Oncology Group of Ontario (POGO) www.pogo.ca. POGO was founded in 1983 by a group of pediatric oncologists to champion childhood cancer care and control. As the representative voice of the childhood cancer community, POGO works to ensure that all of Ontario's children with cancer have equal access to state-of-the-art diagnosis, treatment and required ancillary services.

"We are thrilled to be part of this historic event that will celebrate women and help us to raise awareness about childhood cancer," says Vanessa Melman Yakobson, Director of Development. "From financial subsidies for out of pocket costs during treatment, to programs that support survivors that face late effects due to their illness, POGO helps support children, families and survivors during their whole cancer journey".

Event details

Name: Toronto Women's Half Marathon and 5K Race
Date: Sunday May 31, 2009
Place: Start & finish @ Wilket Creek Park (Leslie and Eglinton), Toronto
Time: TBD – check website for details
Entry fee: Until Oct 31: \$40/half/\$25 for 5K
Nov 1-May 25: \$50/\$35
May 26-31: \$60/\$40
To register: www.TOwomenshalf.com

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For further information about the event, sponsorship opportunities or to book an interview to learn more, contact:

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