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KEIPER FAMILY TO RECEIVE 2021 DON FENNESSY VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Husband-Wife Combo Has Volunteered for 25+ Years on Race Weekend

(DULUTH, MINN.) --- Darrin and Michelle Keiper, along with their two children, will be presented this year with the 2021 Don Fennessy Volunteer of the Year Award following more than two decades of dedicated service to Grandma's Marathon.

In the mid-1990s, Michelle Keiper was a student employee working for Grandma's Marathon Board member Candace Furo, who recruited her to become a race weekend volunteer.

"I coerced Michelle that first year into helping out when she was a student at the University of Minnesota Duluth," Furo said. "She brought Darrin with her, and the rest, as they say, is history."

Darrin and Michelle were later married and moved to the Twin Cities area following graduation, but they have returned every year since to volunteer on Grandma's Marathon weekend in the race packet pick-up area. They have two children, Hallie and Cole, who have both been regulars at several of the organization's events throughout the years.

The Keipers usually arrive in Duluth on Thursday of race weekend and are put to work until very late Friday, and Furo says their help has become instrumental to her and to others tasked with distributing more than 20,000 race packets to participants.

The 2021 Don Fennessy Volunteer of the Year Award will be presented at the 2021 ASICS VIP Reception, which will be held on Saturday, June 19 at 6:00 p.m. in the Harborside Ballroom at the Duluth Entertainment Convention Center (DECC).

The 45th annual Grandma's Marathon weekend will be held June 17-19, 2021. For more information or for interview requests, please contact Marketing & Public Relations Director Zach Schneider via phone at (218) 343-9874 or via email at zach@grandmasmarathon.com.



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ABOUT GRANDMA'S MARATHON

Grandma's Marathon began in 1977 when a group of local runners planned a scenic road race from Two Harbors to Duluth, Minnesota. There were just 150 participants that year, but organizers knew they had discovered something special. Grandma's Marathon weekend draws approximately 20,000 participants for its three-race event each June.

The race got its name from the Duluth-based group of famous Grandma's Restaurants, the first major sponsor of the Marathon. Over time, the level of sponsorship with the restaurants changed, but the name stayed the same. Grandma's Marathon-Duluth, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization with a 17-member Board of Directors and a nine-person, full-time staff.



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