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ALISON MARIELLA DÉSIR TO APPEAR AS SPECIAL GUEST DURING 2023 GRANDMA'S MARATHON WEEKEND

Author & Activist Will Make Several Public Appearances

(DULUTH, MINN.) --- Nationally known author and activist Alison Mariella Désir will be a special guest during the 2023 Grandma's Marathon weekend, making several public appearances throughout the race weekend.

Désir is the founder of Harlem Run and author of *Running While Black*, a book that draws on her personal experiences as an endurance athlete as well as significant and recent historical events for black runners.

The book will be on sale both days during the Essentia Health Fitness Expo, which is scheduled for 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 15 and 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Friday, June 16 at the Duluth Entertainment Convention Center (DECC).

Désir will make several public appearances during her weekend visit to Duluth, all of which are free and open to the public.

MORNING SHAKEOUT RUN

Désir will lead a group run starting at 8:00 a.m. on Friday, June 16 in front of Duluth Running Company. Participants will run along the city's Lakewalk to the Aerial Lift Bridge and back to the store, a total distance of approximately three miles.

With Désir leading from the front, the organized morning run aims to create a safe space where people from underrepresented groups and communities, as well as allies in the running community, can feel seen and supported.

Garmin, a major sponsor of Grandma's Marathon, will also be on site during the event and allowing participants to demo and test their newest Forerunner watches.



Staff from Duluth Running Company are helping to organize the short shakeout run and will have water and refreshments available for participants.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Désir will be delivering a keynote address during this year's Essentia Health Fitness Expo, scheduled for 12:00 p.m. on Friday, June 16 in the DECC's Paulucci Hall.

During her talk, Désir plans to address the experience she and others have had with running that led to the writing of *Running While Black*, widely seen as a searing expose of a supposedly egalitarian sport and a call to reimagine the entire industry.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Immediately after her keynote address, Désir will then sit as a panelist on a Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Roundtable Discussion in the same location, with a scheduled start of 1:00 p.m.

The roundtable discussion, being moderated by Grandma's Marathon Board member Laura Johnson, will bring together people with varying viewpoints and experiences that can give a voice to some of the many underrepresented groups and communities within the running industry.

BOOK SIGNING

Désir will close her public appearance schedule by being available from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Friday, June 16 to sign copies of her book, *Running While Black*, at her booth at the Essentia Health Fitness Expo.

For any questions or interview requests, please contact Marketing & Public Relations Director Zach Schneider via phone at (218) 343-9874 or via email at zach@grandmamarathon.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. After seeing just 150 participants that year, the race weekend has now grown into one of the largest in the United States and welcomes more than 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. In addition to the 26.2-mile race, the organization has now added the Garry Bjorklund Half Marathon and William A. Irvin 5K to its weekend offerings.

As the popularity of Grandma's Marathon has grown, our mission has stayed the same – to organize, promote, and deliver annual events and programs that cultivate running, educational, social, and charitable opportunities to our communities.

Grandma's Marathon-Duluth, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization with a nine-person, full-time staff and a 17-member Board of Directors.



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