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Contact: Zach Schneider
Marketing & Public Relations Director
zach@grandmasmarathon.com
(218) 727-0947

GOUCHER, MARIELLA DÉSIR TO HIGHLIGHT 2023 ESSENTIA HEALTH FITNESS EXPO

Each Scheduled for Book Signings & Live Appearances on Friday, June 16

(DULUTH, MINN.) --- Kara Goucher and Alison Mariella Désir will highlight this year's Essentia Health Fitness Expo, with each scheduled to be selling and signing books as well as other public appearances throughout Grandma's Marathon weekend in Duluth.

Goucher, a Duluth native and two-time US Olympian, will be selling copies of her now New York Times-bestselling book, *The Longest Race*, throughout the two-day expo, and she'll be available to sign copies from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Friday, June 16.

Still the women's event record holder in the Garry Bjorklund Half Marathon, Goucher will also be joining the race broadcast team this year and serving as a finish line analyst on WDIO-TV and The Northland Fan 106.5FM.

She and other broadcast team members – Doug Kurtis, Chad Salmela, and Charlie Mahler – will be joining Dick Beardsley and Carrie Tollefson for their annual pre-race talk show at the fitness expo on Friday afternoon. That show is scheduled for 4:00 p.m. on Friday, June 16 in Paulucci Hall at the Duluth Entertainment Convention Center (DECC), and it is free and open to the public.

Désir, a nationally known activist and mental health advocate, will also be selling copies of her book, *Running While Black*, throughout this year's two-day expo and will be available to sign copies from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Friday, June 16.

A founder of Harlem Run, Désir will also be giving a keynote address at this year's fitness expo to address the experience she and others have had with running that lead to the writing of *Running While Black*, widely seen as a searing exposé of a supposedly egalitarian sport and a call to reimagine the entire industry.



That keynote address is free and open to the public, and it is scheduled for 12:00 p.m. on Friday, June 16 in the DECC's Paulucci Hall.

Désir will then sit as a panelist on a Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Roundtable Discussion in the same location at 1:00 p.m., with the goal being to hear from and give a platform to different underrepresented groups and communities in the running industry.

The 2023 Essentia Health Fitness Expo, now in its 27th year, will feature close to 100 vendors from around the region presenting the latest and best in running apparel, services, and technology in the running and athletic industries.

Held in the DECC's Pioneer Hall and Arena, the fitness expo will be open from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 15 and from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Friday, June 16. It is free and open to the public, and a full list of vendors can be found [HERE](#).

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@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. 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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