



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

GRANDMA'S MARATHON EARNS GOLD LEVEL CERTIFICATION FROM COUNCIL FOR RESPONSIBLE SPORT

Sustainability, DEI Initiatives on Display During 2023 Race Weekend

(DULUTH, MINN.) --- Grandma's Marathon has earned the Gold Level Responsible Sport Certification, the organization announced today following the final stages of certification coming after its 2023 race weekend in mid-June.

The certification is granted by the Council for Responsible Sport, which started in 2007 and now has grown into a recognized leader in helping to measure and manage the social and environmental impacts of events around the world.

Of the 61 credits available in the collection of various best practices, Grandma's Marathon earned 51 and was only four credits shy of earning the highest-available Evergreen Level certification.

"Participating in Grandma's Marathon weekend gives off a neighborhood race vibe where all are welcome while also being a known, international event," Council for Responsible Sport Board Member Dian Vaughn said. "The event is intentionally diverse and inclusive while featuring several sustainability initiatives that helped it earn the gold level certification."

Some specific sustainability statistics from the 2023 Grandma's Marathon weekend:

- 9,860 pounds of plastic, cardboard, and paper recycled
- 302,000 pounds of carbon dioxide offset by participants
- 6,550 pounds of food donated to local food shelves
- 4,360 pounds of compost generated
- 8,609 pounds of clothing donated and resold or recycled
- 234,000 pounds of carbon dioxide avoided by busing participants to start line(s)
- 38,000+ paper cups kept from landfills
- 21,250 bottles recycled in participant jackets



Adolfson & Peterson Construction | Advantage Embroidery & Screen Printing | Anderson's Maple Syrup | Black Woods Grill & Bar | Bud Light Cirrus Aircraft | City of Duluth | Coca-Cola | Country Hearth Natural Breads | Dasani | DEDA | Duluth News Tribune | Essentia Health Garmin | Grand Casino Hinckley/Mille Lacs | Grandma's Restaurant Co. | Great Clips | Holiday Inn & Suites | Holiday Stationstores | Jamar | maurices | Michelina's | Minneapolis Oxygen | Minnesota Pork Board | Minnesota Power/ALLETE | Nature's Gem CBD | Northland FAN 106.5 | Powerade ION4 Storm Creek | Super One Foods | Waste Management | WDIO/WIRT-TV

- 80% of Grandma's Marathon office energy from renewable resources

To qualify for certification, an organization must demonstrate and document its actions in planning and executing its events are in alignment with the Council's standards.

"If we can make this the new normal in our way of thinking," Program Director Alivia Nelson said, "the hope is that it then spreads to our participants, volunteers, and community. We're fortunate to have this beautiful backdrop for our race, and it's a rapidly growing part of our job to make sure it stays that way."

Certifiers were in Duluth this past June to experience for themselves the 2023 Grandma's Marathon weekend and to make final reviews of the organization's work, which included, but were not limited to:

ACCESS & EQUITY

Removing barriers to entry for underrepresented groups within the running community has become a leading, central focus of Grandma's Marathon. After engaging with industry and community leaders, the race added a non-binary category and implemented a program called *Running to Common Ground*, which offers discounted registration fees to participants from underrepresented communities and cultures.

HICCUP

Through a partnership with Hiccup Earth, Grandma's Marathon provided reusable cups at two of its water stations for this year's event, which replaced the need for paper cups at those stations. The reusable cups are provided by Hiccup Earth, which after the race collected and cleaned the cups before sending them to their next event.

CARBON OFFSETS

Through a partnership with NCX, Grandma's Marathon offered participants an opportunity to purchase carbon offsets that will counteract their own travel to the event. The money collected was then distributed to Minnesota landowners in exchange for preserving the forest on their land.

REDISTRIBUTION

Through a partnership with Goodwill-Duluth, Grandma's Marathon annually encourages participants to wear extra layers on race morning that they can discard at the start line. Goodwill-Duluth staff then collects those clothes to then be reused or recycled.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Grandma's Marathon recently installed solar panels on its main office building in Canal Park, allowing the organization to use alternative energy to power its operations throughout the year.

Grandma's Marathon must now update its reporting each year and a site visit will be required every two years for the next six and every three years thereafter to maintain the gold level classification, and the organization's hope is that it can soon rise to the evergreen level.



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.

###

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.



Adolfson&PetersonConstruction | AdvantageEmbroidery &ScreenPrinting | BlackWoodsGrill&Bar | BudLight | CirrusAircraft | CityofDuluth | Coca-Cola
CountryHearthNaturalBreads | Dasani | DEDA | DuluthNewsTribune | EssentiaHealth | GrandCasinoHinckley/MilleLacs | FamousDave's
Grandma'sRestaurantCo. | GreatClips | HolidayInn&Suites | HolidayStationstores | Jamar | maurices | Michelina's | MinnesotaPorkBoard
MinnesotaPower/ALLETE | Nature'sGemCBD | NorthlandFAN106.5 | PoweradeION4 | SuperOneFoods | WasteManagement | WDIO/WIRT-TV