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BEHNING NAMED 2024 DON FENNESSY VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Celebrates 35+ Years of Service to Grandma's Marathon

(DULUTH, MINN.) --- Judy Behning has been named the 2024 Don Fennessy Volunteer of the Year, it was announced today by Grandma's Marathon.

Behning has shown unparalleled commitment to the event for more than 35 years, taking on numerous roles and leaving an undeniable mark on the success of Grandma's Marathon.

After starting in the 1980s working crowd control at Lemon Drop Hill, Behning soon after moved on to pouring beer and collecting money at the event's popular beer tents in Canal Park. It was there she met Linda Hanson, the race's longtime Finance Director, and the two worked together on creating a more efficient and streamlined operation.

"When I got the news, I had to read it a couple times," Behning said of receiving the Volunteer of the Year award. "I still can't believe I was chosen; I'm honored to be included with all the past winners. I met Don Fennessy many years ago, and people like him make you want to do more for our community."

Behning spent many years managing ticket sales for the event's weekend festival, which recently transitioned from near the finish line in Canal Park to Bayfront Festival Park.

One of Behning's favorite memories, though, from her decades volunteering with Grandma's Marathon is from the early years when her children, Derek and Keely, joined to help hand out water bottles to the elite runners. The kids, then in grade school, are now each in their 40s and have been instrumental in the longevity of Behning's career with the marathon.

Named after longtime Grandma's Marathon volunteer and Board member Don Fennessy, this award recognizes individuals or groups who have donated a tremendous amount of time and, in doing so, have assisted in the successful operation of the event. Behning will officially be presented with her award on Thursday, June 27 at the 2024 Grandma's Marathon Volunteer Appreciation Party at Wade Stadium in Duluth.



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DON FENNESSY VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD RECIPIENTS

2024 – Judy Behning	2004 – Carol Gallinger
2023 – Joan Andrews & Tom DeSutter	2003 – Sue Bussa
2022 – Shawn Carlson, David Pollard, & Mike Krzewinski	2002 – David & Jill Hisdahl
2021 – Darrin & Michelle Keiper	2001 – Buck McDonald
2020 – n/a	2000 – Chelly Ferguson
2019 – Mike Tipple	1999 – Durbin Keeney
2018 – Peggy & Doug Simensen	1998 – Proctor Community Band & Mr. Moody's Marching Band
2017 – Geri Peterson	1997 – Don & Ella Fennessy
2016 – Ellen & Wally Johnson	1996 – Bruce & Colleen Hasforth
2015 – Cheryl Fosdick	1995 – Jan DeRoche
2014 – Marge Swor & Family	1994 – Arrowhead Radio Amateurs Club
2013 – Al & Jan Swanson	1993 – Ken & Mona Rae Cich
2012 – College of St. Scholastica	1992 – Herb Dillon
2011 – Jock Glendenning	1991 – Ken Docteur
2010 – John Herbertz	1990 – Seitz Family
2009 – Woodland Hills	1989 – Eric & Amy Kaiser
2008 – Brock Pelzel	1988 – Candy Furo
2007 – Steve & Joyce Lent	1987 – Taire Lind
2006 – Lyle Johnson	1986 – John Leppi
2005 – Barb & Terry Davis	1985 – Ray Paavola

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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