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‘WORK, RUN, WORK’ HAS BECOME POPULAR MANTRA OF 2026 AWARD OF EXCELLENCE RECIPIENT

Dave Lane Enjoys Both Sides of Grandma’s Marathon, Young Athletes Foundation

(DULUTH, MINN.) – Longtime employee and participant Dave Lane has been named the 2026 Mac Welles Award of Excellence recipient, it was announced today by Grandma’s Marathon.

In many ways, Lane has lived a double life during his eight years working for the marathon – he’s regularly one of the first people on-site for setup, takes a break to run the race himself, and then rejoins the crew for teardown and cleanup.

“Work, run, work,” he says with a smile.

Lane was originally placed with Grandma’s Marathon by CHOICE, Unlimited and has seen his role grow and grow over the years. What started as only a couple hours a week is now a bona fide part-time job – his official title is now Operations Assistant – and Lane’s responsibilities have increased over that time as well.

“It’s quite an honor to be chosen for this award,” Lane said. “Everyone is so great to work with, and I enjoy being involved in the running community. I appreciate the chance to be placed here and work with Grandma’s Marathon.”

Lane now regularly attends weekly staff meetings with other full-time employees, and he’s even traveled to other major marathons to work with and learn from other race organizations. He also works – and runs in most – every Young Athletes Foundation (YAF) event throughout the year.

In 2022, Grandma’s Marathon received the Outstanding Disability Employer Award by the Minnesota Organization for Habilitation and Rehabilitation (MOHR) for its continued employment and support of Lane.



Lane was officially presented with his 2026 Mac Welles Award of Excellence on Wednesday, May 20 at a dinner and ceremony at the St. Louis County Depot in Duluth.

MAC WELLES AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

2026 – Dave Lane *Operations Assistant*
2025 – John Hartwick *Spaghetti Dinner Coordinator*
2024 – Super One Foods *Sponsor*
2023 – Tom Rovinsky *Racecourse Water Delivery*
2022 – Al Haeg *Sponsor, Old Home Foods*
2019 – Country Hearth Bread *Sponsor*
2018 – Jim Kari, Peter Kolar, & David Solon *Sponsor, Toyota*
2017 – Jeff Foster Trucking *Sponsor*
2016 – Kathy Bauer *Sponsor, Verizon Wireless*
2015 – Upper Lakes Foods *Sponsor*
2014 – Gordy Anderson *Start Line*
Mike Persing *Massage Therapist*
2013 – Duane Madison *Racecourse Water Delivery*
2012 – Chris & Stephanie LaFleur *Racecourse Services*
2011 – David Bridges *Finish Line Audio*
2010 – Spirit Mountain Ski Patrol *Finish Line Medical Team*
2009 – Sue Bussa *Medical Team*
2008 – Jeff Frey *Race Photographer*
2007 – Leah Hulst, Sandy Brennan *Grandma Rosa*
2006 – Marian Holmes *Race Packet Pickup*
2005 – Gert Belsvick *Spaghetti Dinner Coordinator*
2004 – Dan Russell *Duluth Entertainment Convention Center (DECC)*
2003 – Tom Ehle *Race Security*
2002 – Mike Krois *Bus Transportation Coordinator*
2001 – Chester Keenan *Longtime Volunteer*

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

Started by a local group of runners in 1977, Grandma's Marathon has grown from just 150 participants its first year to now one of the largest and best-known marathons in the United States. Widely regarded as a world class event with small town charm, our race has now added the Garry Bjorklund Half Marathon and William A. Irvin 5K to its weekend offerings.

With all three races combined, our race weekend welcomes more than 20,000 participants – usually from all 50 states and from 70+ different countries – and brings with it close to \$40M of economic impact to the region.

The race got its name from the Duluth-based group of famous Grandma's Restaurants, the first major sponsor of the marathon. As the popularity of Grandma's Marathon weekend 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.



Advantage Embroidery & Screen Printing | Anderson's Maple Syrup | Black Woods Grill & Bar | Circle K | Cirrus Aircraft | City of Duluth | CM2 Supply
Country Hearth Natural Breads | Dasani | Duluth Economic Development Authority | Duluth News Tribune | Essentia Health | Grand Casino Hinkley/Mille Lacs
Grandma's Restaurant Co. | Holiday Inn & Suites | Jamar | maurices | Michelina's | Michelob Ultra | Minnesota Pork Board | Minnesota Power/ALLETE
Napa Auto Parts | Northland FAN 106.5 | Powerade ION4 | Storm Creek | Stryker | Super One Foods | WM | WDIO/WIRT-TV

Grandma's Marathon-Duluth, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization with a 10-person, full-time staff and a 17-member Board of Directors.



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