

**For Immediate Release**

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## **RRCA ANNOUNCES FIRST EVER RUNNER FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES**

The Road Runners Club of America is pleased to announce the first communities to receive the *Runner Friendly Community*® designation, especially our 2011 Outstanding Runner Friendly Community award going to the Monterey Peninsula in California.

The goal of the *Runner Friendly Community* program is to shine a national spotlight on communities that stand out as runner friendly and to provide incentives and ideas for communities to work towards becoming Runner Friendly Communities. Runner friendly communities can increase the quality of life, can improve physical activity for residents as outlined in the National Physical Activity Plan, and can provide for increased economic impact for the community.

"Each organization that completed our detailed application on behalf of their community clearly outlined how their community is meeting and in many ways exceeding our criteria," explained Jean Knaack, RRCA Executive Director. "While all are deserving of the designation, Monterey Peninsula was a clear standout for our Outstanding Runner Friendly Community award for 2011."

### **RRCA RUNNER FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES:**

**Monterey Peninsula, CA - Outstanding Runner Friendly Community**  
**Application submitted by Big Sur International Marathon**

**View their Runner Friendly Community video spotlight at [www.rrca.org/programs/runner-friendly-community/official/](http://www.rrca.org/programs/runner-friendly-community/official/)**

The Monterey Peninsula is one of the nation's top visitor destinations offering an abundance of outdoor activities -- the numerous trails are well suited for walking, running and biking. The abundance of great running routes make the Monterey Peninsula a perfect spot for foot races, which serve as fundraising events for local charities. A few of note are the Big Sur Half Marathon on Monterey Bay, the Together with Love Run, the Stevenson School Run, the SPCA's Wag n Walk, the Juvenile Diabetes Coastal Walk, and the Triathlon at Pacific Grove, to name only a few.

The Monterey Peninsula is a devoted running community. Not only do thousands of local residents participate in all the local races, but many in the community volunteer as well. The Big Sur International Marathon counts nearly 2,500 volunteers for its spring race. The area is also home to the nonprofit running club, Wednesday Night Laundry Runners (WNLR) with over 250 members.

In addition to the strong support of elected officials and city staff members, the local Chambers of Commerce and Convention & Visitors Bureau promotes outdoor activities such as running in their promotional materials and outreach to visitors and the travel media. The Monterey County Visitors Guide and award-winning website features running events and the abundance of outdoor trails in the community. The cities' website also lists the variety of races that are held on the Monterey Peninsula. The Community Recreation Department organizes summer track meets, and the local college, Cal State University Monterey Bay, offers its track for kids' races throughout the year.

The City of Monterey has given a significant cash grant to bolster the JUST RUN youth fitness program and to support two annual JUST RUN! Just Kids 3K goal races. The JUST RUN youth fitness program is held in 30 elementary schools on the Monterey Peninsula, reaching nearly 4,000 students.

With Monterey County being such a popular running destination, the local media provides coverage for local races, high school Cross Country and Track & Field, and running in general. The Monterey Herald has two standing running columns, *The Running Life*, penned by local distance runners Mike

Dove and Donald Buraglio, and *Marathon Mom*, written by Olympic Marathoner Blake Russell. The local television stations regularly sponsor local races as well as provide race day coverage. KSBW Television, the local NBC affiliate, runs live morning shows from the Big Sur races and features nearly a week of pre-race coverage. Another local newspaper columnist, John Devine, has a weekly webcast, which often features current high school runners on his in-studio show. All local media enthusiastically cover kids running events and programs throughout the year.

Community leaders that provided support and letters of recommendation included Chuck Della Sala, Mayor of the City of Monterey, John Reyes, President & CEO of the Monterey Convention & Visitors Bureau, Dana M. Jones, Monterey Sector Superintendent, Monterey District - California State Parks and many more.

#### **Dallas, TX** - Application submitted by the Dallas Running Club

Dallas offers many trails and sidewalk options for runners, and there continues to be more and longer options developed. The most common trails include the Dallas White Rock Lake covering 9.3 miles and very little car traffic. Many areas are well lit with water fountains aplenty. There are permanent restroom structures as well as porta-poties available for runners' use. The Katy Trail is 3.5 miles with a separate asphalt trail for runners. Water fountains are located on the route and clearly marked warning signs for automobiles to yield to the runner traffic. The Santa Fe Trail, which is approximately 4 miles, connects Deep Ellum and Downtown to the White Rock Lake. Dallas is home to the Dallas Running Club, one of the top three largest RRCA running clubs in the country. The city also boasts over 30 running events held annually. Debbie Fetterman writes a weekly column in the Dallas Morning News with information about upcoming races, interesting stories of runners, and race results are posted in the sports section. Through the Community Council of Greater Dallas, the organization has a collaborative local physical activity plan to promote healthy lifestyles for Dallas area children through physical activity and nutrition.

Community leaders that provided support and letters of recommendation included Dallas Running Club President, Peggy Munroe, Dallas White Rock Marathon Race Director, Marcus Grunewald, Friends of the Katy Trail Executive Director, Robin Baldock, Former Dallas Police Chief, David Kunkle, and many more.

#### **Wichita Falls, TX** - Application submitted by the Wichita Falls Runners Club

Wichita Falls has a Metropolitan Planning Committee composed of city leaders (Government, Police, Fire, and Streets and Parks), businesses, community advocates – both cyclists and runners, that meet quarterly and discuss, plan, apply for grant funds and continually update their 10-year trail access plan. The Committee has a projected 26-mile concrete loop trail circling the city with many spurs; so all areas of the city are accessible by the trail. The committee also makes provisions for trail lighting, bathrooms, water fountains, and safety. The trail includes an additional dirt system that has been voted as the best urban trail in Texas. The concrete trail currently has over 11-miles of finished trail, and a two-mile connector is currently under construction. The community is home to the Wichita Falls Runners Club and home to the largest Air Force training base, Sheppard Air Force Base. The running community receives a great deal of support from the Air Force who hosts runs, provides volunteers, and supports local events.

Community leaders that provided support and letters of recommendation included Glenn Barham, Mayor of Wichita Falls, TX, Harry Patterson, President of Patterson Auto Center, Inc., Jarvis Polvado, Owner of Texoma Cycling Center, Richard and Susan Koch, Owners of EAT Ventures dba as Quiznos, and more.

#### **Fredericksburg, VA** - Application submitted by the Marine Corps Marathon and the Fredericksburg Area Running Club

Fredericksburg area has sidewalks, multi-use trails, and paths that are runner-friendly. This includes the historic downtown area, Lee Drive, Civil War battleground trails, and the Rappahannock River Heritage Trail that runners share. Within the next few months, the Riverside Drive Trail project will connect with the Canal path allowing for a 5k loop. The University of Mary Washington (UMW) and local high schools allow public use of their state-of-the art tracks, which are well lit and maintained. Local trails and parks offer drinking fountains; public restrooms are provided in the downtown district; and UMW has emergency phones posted. The majority of the running areas are maintained to include snow removal in the winter. Fredericksburg Area Trail Maintenance Group involvement ensures upkeep of the trails. Most streets and major intersections in the city utilize well marked stop signs, traffic/cross walk lights and well marked cross walks. The Fredericksburg Pathways Committee and Fredericksburg Office of Planning and Community Development are committed to expanding trails and paths for running and pedestrian use. They ensure upkeep, safety and public awareness and have a master plan developed. City office and council members support race organizers by approving permits, promoting races and showing commitment by supporting the running community. Fredericksburg FD/PD is actively involved in race planning and execution.

Community leaders that provided support and letters of recommendation included Rick Nealis, Director Marine Corps Marathon Jack Morrison, President, Fredericksburg Area Running Club (FARC), Tom Tomzak, Mayor City of Fredericksburg, and George Solley, Councilmember Ward 2, City of Fredericksburg.

Learn more about the RRCA Runner Friendly Community program at <http://www.rrca.org/programs/runner-friendly-community/>

### **About the RRCA;**

Founded in 1958, the RRCA is the oldest and largest distance running organization in the United States with over 1500 running club and event members representing 200,000 individual runners active in their running communities. The RRCA is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization with the IRS, and a nine-person volunteer board of directors that is elected by our membership governs the organization.

The mission and vision of the RRCA is to promote the development and growth of running clubs, running events, and supporting the common interests of recreational runners throughout the country at all stages in life. Through the RRCA, we provide a national infrastructure for the development of recreational adult and youth running clubs and events that have boomed into a robust sporting activity. The RRCA actively promotes running as a healthy lifestyle and positive social activity. We strive to provide quality programming that can be replicated throughout the country, such as our highly successful *Start a Running Club* program has been the cornerstone of our organization for over fifty years.