



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Press Contacts:

Lucy MacNichol, lmacnichol@devinepowers.com, 215-568-2525, cell: 267-884-2738

Randy Giancaterino, randy.giancaterino@phila.gov, 215-683-2070, cell: 215-267-207-5068

MAYOR NUTTER OPENS PHILADELPHIA MARATHON RACE WEEKEND AND ANNOUNCES SECOND ANNUAL HIGH FIVE AWARD RECIPIENT

Two-Day Health & Fitness Expo opens to the public; High Five Award Winner announced; Runner's World's Bart Yasso congratulates Runner's World Challenge participants; Legacy Runners honored for running every Philadelphia Marathon,

PHILADELPHIA (November 18, 2011) – With less than 48 hours until the 7:30 a.m. start of the Philadelphia Marathon on Sunday, November 20, Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter officially kicked off Race Weekend today, cutting the ribbon at the free, two-day Health & Fitness Expo at the Pennsylvania Convention Center.

Joined by Philadelphia Marathon Executive Race Director Melanie Johnson and event sponsors, Mayor Nutter unveiled this year's race medal and presented the official 2011 Philadelphia Marathon and Philadelphia Half Marathon race bibs to local, top-seeded runners -- some of whom will be attempting U.S. Olympic Trials Marathon qualifying times at the Philadelphia race.

In addition, *Legacy Runner* Mark Sullivan, who has participated in every Philadelphia Marathon and will run his 18th Philadelphia Marathon on Sunday, expressed his affinity for the race and displayed his medals and jerseys from the past 17 races, along with fellow *Legacy Runner*, Bob Koen. Sullivan has chosen the Philadelphia race to mark his 150th career marathon. A Cheer Zone atmosphere was created with local group Funtown Productions, who also will be performing along the marathon course on Sunday, and for the second year, the Mayor's High Five Award was presented.

The athletes in the Philadelphia Marathon have become accustomed to seeing Mayor Nutter at the start line of the race, high-fiving runners as they set out on the 26.2-mile course. The annual Mayor's High Five Award was given to marathoner runner Jude Dinan, (pronounced: *Dye-nan*) from Troy, New York, whose inspirational journey to the starting line is as much a victory as crossing the finish. Anyone could nominate a 2011 Philadelphia Marathon participant who was registered for the full marathon, and participants were permitted to nominate themselves. The award celebrates overcoming obstacles and demonstrating courage to get to the marathon start line. The winner was selected by the Mayor's High Five Award Committee.

-MORE-

Philadelphia Marathon kickoff/ Ad 1

Dinan was nominated by her sister, Katria Hitrick, for the second annual Mayor's High Five Award, extolling her courage, perseverance and the obstacles she had to overcome while training for the marathon. According to Hitrick, a year ago Dinan, now 52, became severely ill with what doctors originally believed was lung cancer.

Dinan, who was never a smoker, had a large tumor on her lung that gave her extreme chest and back pain, and made her weak and unable to perform daily tasks such as shower, dress and eat. Both had recently lost their brother and father to cancer and because of this, Dinan's family noticed that her symptoms were different than those experienced by brother and father.

They were not convinced that she had cancer. After some research and a visit to an infectious disease specialist, it was discovered that Dinan had inhaled mold and crystal spores. Dinan's organs started shutting down, and doctors had to quickly change her treatment to include large doses of antibiotics and the medicine that is used to counteract anthrax. If her diagnoses had been discovered two weeks later, she may have died, according to her doctors. Instead, over the course of the next few months, Dinan slowly recuperated and regained her strength. Through running, she has been able to appreciate and take advantage of her second chance at life.

"Every run has been an opportunity, a lesson enabling me to better understand my life and how I envision moving forward," Jude Dinan said. "I have come to understand how running does in fact mimic life. Every time you lace up your shoes you are never certain what the journey will bring to you. Running helps me to feel alive and connects me to myself, and to others. Each day I knew if I could get my running shoes on and move I would see another day. Running the Philadelphia Marathon will be a celebration of the gift of life."

Said Mayor Michael Nutter: "Jude exemplifies the can-do spirit of the High Five Award. Her courage, heart and tenacity are inspiring to all of us. The High Five Award is an opportunity to celebrate her personal accomplishments and represents the true passion of many of our race participants. I am looking forward to cheering for Jude and all of the participants with high-fives of support at the starting line on Sunday."

Bart Yasso, Chief Running Officer at *Runner's World*, congratulated runners who joined the Runner's World Challenge. The 2011 Philadelphia Marathon was selected by *Runner's World* as this year's challenge race and was an exclusive opportunity for Philadelphia Marathon runners to be coached by leading marathon authority Bart Yasso, train with the *Runner's World* editors, and get advice from the experts on training, nutrition and injury prevention. Three hundred participants total trained for the Philadelphia Marathon and Philadelphia Half Marathon under the guidance of the Runner's World Challenge.

Local seasoned marathoners Mark Sullivan, of Freeburg, Pa. and Bob Koen, of Cherry Hill, N.J., proudly displayed jerseys and medals from the first 17 Philadelphia Marathons during the press conference. As part of the prestigious Legacy Runners club, Sullivan and Koen have run every Philadelphia Marathon since the race's inception in 1994, and will run their 18th Philadelphia Marathon on Sunday. "Philly is always the place I want to run," says Koen. "I have an emotional tie here. I went to school and have friends here. It just feels like home."

-MORE-

Philadelphia Marathon kickoff/ Ad 2

This year's race is especially important for many of the top seed and elite runners who are hoping to qualify for the Olympic Team Trials Marathon which will be held in Houston in January. According to Philadelphia Marathon elite runner coordinator Ross Martinson, 15 men and 15 women have run races that are within three minutes of qualifying for the U.S. Olympic Team Trials Marathon, and will look to qualify on Sunday on Philadelphia's fast and relatively flat course. Additionally, eight women and 10 men are using the Philadelphia Half Marathon course as their last effort to qualify for the Olympic Trials

The mayor and Dinan were led by cheers from fans waving foam High Five hands in a simulated cheer zone at the press event. Before the conclusion of the press conference, the Mayor revealed the 2011 Philadelphia Marathon and finisher medal, and the race bibs. The race bibs are adorned with each participant's name so the expected 60,000 fans along the course in Running's Best Host City can personally cheer for the runners. Each participant who crosses the finish line will receive a medal to proudly display their achievement and remember the race for years to come.

The City of Philadelphia, Running's Best Host City, will welcome more than 27,000 registrants across all races and more than 60,000 spectators at the **2011 Philadelphia Marathon Race Weekend**. In addition to the Philadelphia Marathon on Sunday, November 20, Race Weekend features three other races – the Half Marathon also on Sunday, as well as the Rothman Institute 8K and the Arctic Ease Kids Fun Run on Saturday, November 19. Other activities to welcome participants, families, friends, spectators, businesses and residents include a free two-day Health & Fitness Expo; a free course map, Fan Pass complete with retail discounts and promotions, and more than 25 spectator cheer zones. Participants pass many of Philadelphia's famous attractions on the swift and scenic USATF-certified course, which is a Boston qualifier. Take the first step to experiencing 26.2 miles of fun, beauty, history and excitement by visiting www.philadelphiamarathon.com.

###