



A GRANDMA'S  MARATHON PROGRAM

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TORTOISE & HARE FOOTWEAR RECEIVES YAF AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

(DULUTH, MINN.) --- Tortoise & Hare Footwear, represented by owners Jim and Mary Stukel, were presented last night with the 2022 Young Athletes Foundation (YAF) Award of Excellence.

A longtime sponsor of the YAF, Tortoise & Hare has been a major partner in the organization's Running Shoe Program, which gifts certificates for free shoes to each high school varsity cross country and track and field program within our five-county region.

Since its start in 1991, the Running Shoe Program has donated more than 4,500 pairs of shoes valuing nearly \$300,000 to area high school runners in need.

The Stukels themselves, in fact, have driven hundreds of miles over the years to deliver shoes to schools located within the five-county region, but far enough away from Duluth that travel for young runners and their families was a concern.

"Jim and Mary have always understood that these shoes represent opportunity, and they've worked long and hard to make sure that opportunity is available to as many people as possible," Executive Director Shane Bauer said. "They and the team at Tortoise & Hare continue to go above and beyond and, in doing so, have helped hundreds, if not thousands of young runners over the years."

Also a longtime presence at the fitness expo on race weekend, Tortoise & Hare has brought many of the top shoe brands to Grandma's Marathon participants as well. That includes, for the past two years, being the official partner and supplier of ASICS shoes during the two-day fitness expo in June.

The first-ever Award of Excellence was given in 2017, thought of and created as a way to recognize and honor dedication, commitment, and service to the development and growth of the Young Athletes Foundation.

Past YAF Award of Excellence Recipients

2017 – Tony Guy & Family, Hector Serrano, Sydney Miller

2018 – Eve & Wayne Graves

2019 – Jesse Hurtig, Doug Runnoe, Crystal Boyd

2020 – n/a

2021 – Dana Moore & St. Scholastica Volleyball Team

Attached for media use are photos of the Stukels receiving the award on behalf of the store during the annual YAF appreciation banquet on Wednesday evening.

For more information or for interview requests, please contact Marketing & Public Relations Director Zach Schneider via email at zach@grandmasmarathon.com or call our office at (218) 727-0947.

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ABOUT THE YOUNG ATHLETES FOUNDATION (YAF)

Created in 1990, the Young Athletes Foundation (YAF) works to support the growth and development of youth athletics throughout northeast Minnesota and northwest Wisconsin by assisting community members and local businesses to provide pathways of opportunity for kids to live active and healthy lifestyles.

The YAF offers community support in a variety of ways, including our Grant Program, Running Shoe Program, and UMD Eleanor Rynda Scholarship Fund. The organization also hosts several kids' events throughout the year including Wednesday Night & Saturday Morning at the Races.

The YAF's mission is helped and funded by various road races throughout the year --- the St. Fennessy 4K, Fitger's 5K, Park Point 5-Miler, Minnesota Mile, and North End Nightmare.

Since its inception, the YAF has contributed more than \$1.3 million to area nonprofit youth athletic organizations.

