YOUNG ATHLETES FOUNDATION
A GRANDMA'S MARATHON PROGRAM

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FIRST TIMERS RUN LIKE THE WIND AT 37TH ANNUAL FITGER'S 5K

Sigsworth Becomes Youngest Women's Winner in Event's History

(DULUTH, MINN.) --- The fastest thing in downtown Duluth on Saturday morning was the all-too-common 30 mile-per-hour wind gusts; a close second though were 2026 Fitger's 5K winners Ben Vaske and Violet Sigsworth.

Vaske, a 30-year-old from St. Paul, Minn., ran 15:10 to mark the fastest men's winning time since Joe Moore's event record of 14:53 in 2003. Vaske edged four-time defending and seven-time overall champion Scott Behling, who finished a close second in 15:12.

"I knew he was going be stiff competition," Vaske said of Behling, the winningest runner in Fitger's 5K history. "I followed his lead, we shared the work, and we were running neck-and-neck until I was able to pull away from him as we came back through downtown to the finish."

The 14-year-old Sigsworth, meanwhile, became the event's youngest-ever women's champion when she crossed the line in 19:27. A ninth grader from Thunder Bay, Ont., Sigsworth has only been running competitively for three years.

"I think I was leading for most of the race," Sigsworth said. "People were cheering, so I knew mostly where I was, but I tried to just pick it up as I went along."

Sigsworth ran most of the race with her dad, Kip, who finished in 26th place of the men's race in 19:05. It was a personal record for Sigsworth, who finished 22 seconds ahead of runner-up Lillian Nelson.

Both Vaske and Sigsworth were competing in their first-ever Fitger's 5K. Meanwhile, Ryn Haaversen, from Duluth, Minn., was the non-binary champion, finishing in 30:19.

In the Fitger's 5K walk division, 11-year-old Elliot Coffman, from Superior, Wis., won the men's race in 25:20 and 58-year-old Stacy Milner, from Duluth, Minn., won the women's race in 37:30.

There were 1,480 registered participants, including 395 kids age 18 & under, in this year's Fitger's 5K, making it the largest event since 2019. 1,238 participants reached the finish line in either the 5K run or walk, also the most since 2019.

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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YOUNG ATHLETES FOUNDATION

The mission of the Young Athletes Foundation (YAF) is to assist in the promotion, development, and growth of youth athletics and activities that encourage physical fitness, mental, and emotional well-being.

Since its inception in 1990, the YAF has contributed more than $1.8 million of community support through our grant program, running shoe program, and both the Eleanor Rynda and Steve & Carolyn Mather scholarships. The organization also hosts several kids' events throughout the year including our Wednesday Night & Saturday Morning at the Races series.

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

