



CANADIAN MARATHON STORIES

A BOOK OF EXTRAORDINARY INSPIRATIONS



Foreword by
JOHN STANTON,
founder of the
Running Room



Proceeds from
the sale of this
book will go to
the **CANADIAN
ATHLETES
NOW** Fund for
our Canadian
athletes in
training.

Editor
LINDA RAINVILLE WAGAR

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"Without the funding that I received from the Canadian Athletes Now Fund, I would not be wearing the gold medal around my neck."

~ Adam van Koeverden, 2004 Olympic Gold & Bronze Medalist, Kayak, Fund Recipient

"I can't put into words how important the Canadian Athletes Now Fund was to me and how necessary it is for all of Canada's amateur athletes."

~ Jayna Hefford, Canadian Olympian, Women's Hockey, Fund Recipient

"I have witnessed the positive impact that the Canadian Athletes Now Fund has had on many of my teammates. This organization has not only supported athletes financially, but it has raised a tremendous amount of awareness to the importance in sports in Canada!"

~ David Sabourin, National Team Member Trampoline, Fund Recipient

"The Canadian Athletes Now Fund has brought the support of Canadian athletes, our "future heroes," to a new level. I have a poster in my classroom that states: "You cannot fulfill your dreams unless you dare to risk it all" the Canadian Athletes Now Fund is helping to fulfill many dreams including my own!"

~ Mandy Poitras, Cycling, Fund Recipient

The CAN Fund

Buying this book is choosing to support the Canadian Athletes Now Fund. The CAN Fund is a not-for-profit organization devoted solely to raising funds and awareness for Canada's athletes. The Fund has been set up to help Canada's athletes get ready for international summer and winter Games. Monies donated to the Fund are put directly into the hands of Canadian elite athletes to support their training, coaching, nutrition and living expenses in preparation for international competition. The mission is to underwrite the expenses of as many Canadian athletes as possible, as support is needed years before the medals can be obtained.

- Direct funding is provided to both able-bodied and paralympic athletes.
- Twice a year athletes can apply for funding - spring and fall. With each application athletes must fill out a very detailed assessment of their current training and financial situation.
- The Fund provides approved athletes with \$6,000 each, twice a year. Athletes can receive up to \$12,000 a year from the Fund.
- Athletes use this direct funding for better nutrition, coaching, training camps, international competitions and basic living expenses.
- In October 2003 the Fund received charitable status.
- CAN Fund was formerly known as "See You In".
- CAN Fund has raised over \$4 million, since its inception in 1997.



Foreword
John Stanton

Most sports conclude with a winner and a loser. Marathon running is unique. Success comes from preparation, tenacity and discipline, culminating with a celebration at the finish line. Marathon running is a continual journey of self assessment and improvement.

Runners make marathons a major part of their lives - for the challenge, with generous rewards achieved through a clear focus on a goal. This continual setting of new goals and striving to achieve loftier results is what gives life itself, substance.

Marathon running creates a personal, professional and community win for the athlete.

Runners are all athletes, regardless of their performance prowess. Some are fast, some slow, but they all start at the same start line and finish at the same finish line. The slow runner is amazed by the speed of the elite; the elite are amazed at the staying power of the slower runner.

Some runners run for self satisfaction, others to overcome personal obstacles. Still others, run for people unable to run for themselves.

Children run for the joy of play; adults run to rediscover play.

Performance athletes run for the pride of their country and the accolades of their peers.

Running a marathon is not easy. If it was, everyone would run a marathon to savor the empowerment and joy delivered at the finish line.

The stories in the following pages touch the hot buttons of running. You

will be inspired by Mark Black as he recants his journey of insurmountable odds when facing a double lung and heart transplant. You will be stimulated by his complex and ultimate journey to a marathon finish line.

You will be entertained with the brilliant, lively and humorous writings of Louise Rachlis.

Enjoy the splendid photos that capture the power and social aspects of the group run. Marathon running has transformed itself from a solitary, lonely sport to the community connection and support provided through the group run. Each runner benefits from the group dynamics, sharing their great conversations, training tips, nutritional choices, schedule planning and life in general.

Discover destination marathons as Jennifer Sharpe describes the fun of running the Disney Marathon.

The story of Shannon Loutitt will caress you with her heart-rending story of running Boston in the footsteps of her famous grandfather.

Marathon success stories are written by the Canadian community and assembled to assist Canadian athletes. The inspiration and motivation is yours to discover the best within you.

The book is dedicated to Emilie Mondor who, as described by her performance coach Ken Parker, was one of the best up and coming female marathon runners in the world. While her life was tragically cut short, the memory of this very talented athlete will live long in the hearts of Canadians.

Linda Wagar has assembled a charming collection of marathon success stories. Each story shares the true joy and deep meaning of marathon running success.

Read, then re-read these fascinating stories. Discover the athlete within you as you become a runner with a marathon success story to share in the future.

You too can do it and finish smiling!

John Stanton,

President & Founder

The Running Room

Linda Rainville
Wagar,
Editor

At the age of 43, I decided to learn to run. I needed to find a quick and easy way to stay fit and keep up with my 2 young children. What developed was a love of not only running, but of long distance running. What also ensued was my ability to change aspects of my lifestyle and embrace healthier habits. Two years later, I would enter and complete the New York City marathon. It was a pivotal moment in my life. I returned home, to Ottawa with a mission.

I had always been inspired by running stories. I would give back to the running community by launching a website called "Canadian Marathon Stories". This book is a compilation of some of these stories. I hope they will inspire, motivate, and entertain. This is my labour of love and proceeds from the sale of this book will go to the Canadian Athletes Now Fund, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to raising funds to help support our Canadian athletes.

This book was inspired over the course of many runs. Kilometer after kilometer and many training partners lent me the encouragement, ideas and creativity that I would need to see this project through. There are too many of you to name, but you know who you are and your footprints are on these pages. I look forward to hearing your comments on this book!

Feel free to submit your stories and we will post them on our website.

www.canadianmarathonstories.ca

linda@lindawagar.com



Emilie Mondor

*Photo courtesy of Bernard Brault
-LaPresse*

Tribute to Emilie Mondor
by
Lynne Bermel

■ *"This book is dedicated to Emilie Mondor - the soft-spoken Mascouche, Quebec native known as much for her infectious love of running as her unparalleled mental toughness"*

Emilie Mondor, 25, one of Canada's most accomplished distance runners, had her marathon dreams cut short when she was killed tragically in a car accident in September 2006. The first Canadian to dip below the 15-minute mark in the 5,000 meters, she had been training in Ottawa for her marathon debut in the ING New York City Marathon. Her death shocked the running community in Canada and around the world.

This book is dedicated to Emilie Mondor - the soft-spoken Mascouche, Quebec native known as much for her infectious love of running as her unparalleled mental toughness. She had represented Canada at the 2004 Olympics in Athens and was looking toward racing the marathon in Beijing in 2008. She had been injured throughout 2005 with a rare bone disease and was on the comeback trail - hoping to translate her international success as a track runner into marathon glory.

But it was not to be. Instead, the women racing the streets of New York City wore black wrist bands in her memory.

Her last coach, Ottawa's Ken Parker, believes that Emilie would have rewritten the record books for marathon running in Canada. Her training and results from testing at the human performance lab in Ottawa just before she died indicated that she could have been one of the best female marathoners in the world.

But it was more than her physical strength...

"Emilie loved to run more than anyone I know," he says. "Some people have the

ability to hurt but they just don't have the engine to do it. Emilie had both. She had a very special gift and she lived up to it. She reined in every last ounce of energy from her body every time she raced. She held nothing back. That's what set her apart."

Emilie Mondor, Canadian marathon hopeful, died much too early. If she taught us anything, it was to never give up. To focus on the positive, no matter how bad it gets. And to share the joy and love of running.

Emilie, you touched so many during your short life. We will miss you but we will never forget you.

Lynne Bermel is a former world-ranked Ironman competitor and marathoner. She is currently living in Ottawa as a communications consultant, as well as a freelance writer and TV host. She was one of the last people to interview Emilie Mondor.

**Hommage à
Emilie Mondor
par
Linda Rainville
Wagar**

■ *"Les deux,
vous aviez
un rêve.
Pour toi,
Pékin; pour
Terry, courir
à travers le
Canada."*

Je te connaissais grâce aux histoires dans les journaux. Tu étais l'exemple de la détermination, du talent, de l'ambition. Tu avais le focus nécessaire pour atteindre et réaliser ton rêve. C'est ce que je retenais de toi.

Je ne te connaissais pas personnellement mais étant "fan" de course, je t'encourageais de loin. Tu avais aussi relevé des défis, ce qui te rendait encore plus forte. Tu étais unique, la femme la plus rapide au Canada à courir le 5,000 mètres et ce, en moins de 15 minutes! Plus tard, j'ai appris ton départ de ce monde, mais pas avant d'avoir accompli une belle petite course de 29 km avec ton entraîneur. Tu te sentais bien.

Le lendemain, quand le monde a appris ton départ de cette vie, je ne pus que proposer à mon groupe qui s'entraînait pour le semi marathon, de courir la distance de 18km en ta mémoire. Souvent, je sens que tu cours avec moi. Tu me donnes cette force, tu m'inspires. Je sais que je ne suis pas seule Émilie, je ne suis pas seule qui cours et qui sens ta présence.

Plus tard, j'ai compris que ce livre te serait dédié à toi, Émilie. Tu représentais les qualités de mon héros Terry Fox. Les deux, vous aviez un rêve. Pour toi, c'était les Olympiques de 2008 à Pékin; pour Terry, c'était courir à travers le Canada. On court maintenant pour vous, pour que vos rêves continuent à nous inspirer à aller de l'avant, parce que l'on peut. Terry Fox, avec son "marathon de l'espoir" et maintenant, avec "la course d'Emilie". Merci pour ce cadeau.

*Merci très sincèrement,
Linda Rainville Wagar*



Photo courtesy of Angelo Talluto

Angelo Talluto

■ "I don't know what that feeling or vision was, but I do know that it was responsible for taking my soul to a place that it had never been. I ran for 41K but floated for 1.2."

Angelo Talluto from Toronto, Ontario sent this story at the very early stages of having launched our website. It became the story which kept inspiring me of the power of one.

I was a 30 year old, healthy, athletic male, newlywed teacher, with a wonderful wife who was seven months pregnant. Things were great. The next day, my profile changed. In a matter of hours, the doctors, one being my friend Dave, had determined that I had a large brain tumour that has been slowly growing for 8-10 years. My profile was now a 30-year-old, newlywed male with a wonderful pregnant wife, and a brain tumour.

Surgery happened a month later. The days in the hospital were horrible. I remember each minute, hour, and day I spent there. I particularly remember a strange moment that happened to me in the middle of the night. I lay in my hospital bed, with no one around, my head between my knees, and cried. I took a deep breath, looked up, and saw white. White is the only way to put it in words. It was more of a feeling, a sense of hope and direction, but also one of confusion. What was it? Why was I feeling this way? The next thing I know, my nurse comes into my room and wakes me up.

Confused as can be, I dismissed it, figuring it was the medication playing tricks on my mind. I regained feeling in my arm and my rehab began to show some progress.

After a severely depressing month of August, September came around, and

things began to change. My son was born on the 27th and rehab was looking good. It lasted until November when I was diagnosed with Classic K.S, a rare type of skin Cancer. I had surgery again to remove a few tumours on my foot, but this time, instead of falling into depression again, I became desperate and obsessed with doing whatever I could do to make this go away. Running a marathon was my answer.

I can't really say why I picked a marathon, but it seemed the most extreme way of distracting me. Completing an extreme physical challenge within one year of my surgery may be the inspiration my family might long for if ever they needed it. People thought I was crazy, especially with the medication I was on. I thought it was necessary.

I signed up for the Ottawa marathon in May. I did everything possible to make sure I was ready. Although we never ran together, my friend Dave decided to run it as well. Time was not an issue while I was training. I was only concerned with finishing. My training had a few bumps in the road (no pun intended), but I made it to the start.

The gun goes, and I kept questioning myself: "Why am I here?" What am I doing? I began to run and continuously questioned my sanity. The 4:15 Pace Bunny was working out well until I had to go to the washroom. By the time I got back on the road, the 4:15 was out of sight. I debated what to do, and then decided to chase him. I finally got to him a few km later. I began to wonder how close I was to the 4hr Bunny. I asked someone in the crowd and they said he just passed. I thought of how much better, and wonderful, it would be to achieve my first marathon under 4 hrs and became obsessed with catching him. I figured if I could catch up to the 4:15 after the washroom break, then I can catch the 4 hr PB easily. I asked again, and one gentleman said just over a minute. Every time I asked someone, they would tell me that I was closer and closer.

The half way mark came and went quickly. I saw my wife and boy and it just made me want that 4hr bunny even more. By 27K I began running behind a man who seemed to look like Dave. Once I got closer, I realized who it was and almost tackled

him. Dave's eyes almost popped out when he saw me and I was so happy to see him!! Throughout my surgery, Dave was so supportive and always made me feel strong. He did the same during the race. I felt great.

At 33K, I was still obsessed by the 4hr bunny, and I told Dave I wanted 4hrs, and looking at how good I looked, he pushed me forward to go get him. A woman beside me also had the same intentions, so we ran together, supporting each other to catch this guy.

At 36K, we asked again, and someone screamed out "100 meters!" We knew we had him. Just a little bit to go, and then it happened. I now know why it's called hitting the wall. All of a sudden, I had nothing. I looked at the woman and told her to go get him. She went, and I broke down in tears. I thought the race was over. I lost 4 hrs. My legs were hurting, I felt dizzy, and my body was pleading with me to stop, but I knew it wasn't an option. This horrible year would not end without that finish line.

Dave caught up at 40K and was surprised to see me in that condition. I knew he wanted to stay with me, but I pushed him along. This was my journey to take, and I had to take it alone.

At 41K, it seemed that it was over for me, but then all of a sudden, it happened. Thousands of people were watching, screaming and waving their arms frantically in support of all the runners, and I didn't even notice. I lifted my sunglasses to wipe the tears, and once I opened my eyes, the feeling came back: I was seeing white again, nothing else, just white. That familiar feeling was back and it carried me 1200 meters to the finish line.

I don't know what that feeling or vision was, but I do know that it was responsible for taking my soul to a place that it had never been. I ran for 41K, but floated for 1.2.

The last 10 seconds before finishing was my countdown to the end of this year. I enter this New Year with a new profile:

A strong 31 yr old father, husband, Cancer survivor, and Marathon runner.

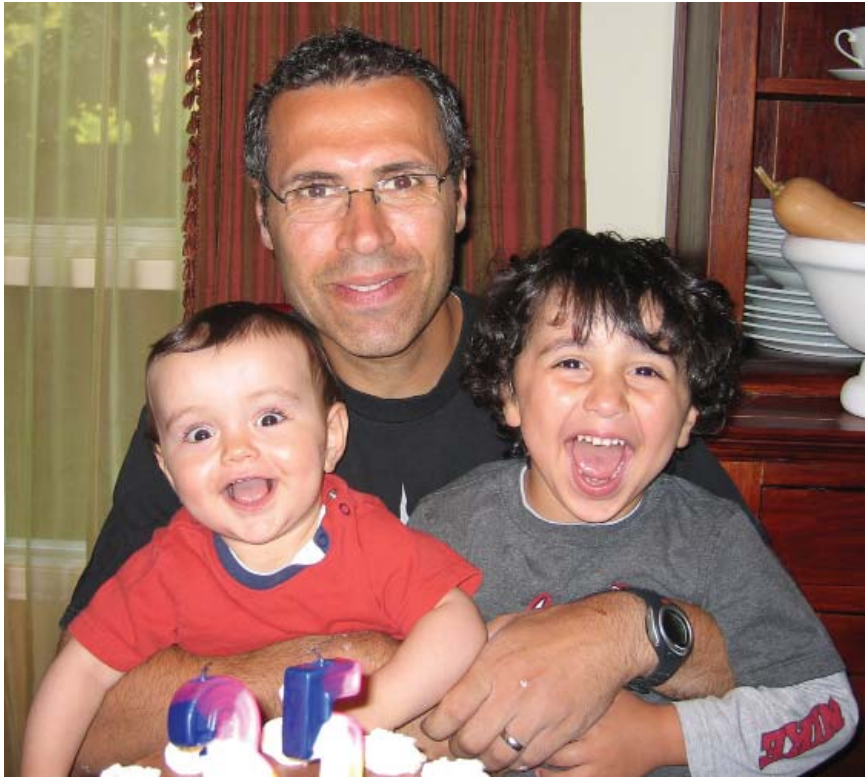


Photo courtesy of Angelo Talluto

Angelo is a husband & father of 2 boys, and a grade 4 teacher. He has recently lost his father to cancer. For the second time in his life, a tragedy has made him a stronger person.

"Each time I do go out, I remember the journey that I've taken to get to where I am today and it always makes me want to sprint the last kilometer home."



"They are all inspiring stories, about people going beyond their limits. These people are no different than me, or the guy who decides to get off the couch and run a 5K. It's about deciding you are going to do something and just doing it!"

Ray Zahab, Canada's Adventure Runner who ran 7,000 kms across the Sahara Desert in 111 days.

"Linda Wagar's selected stories convey the spirit and spark of a new wave of marathon enthusiasts. It is enriching to share in the realization of so many unsuspected capabilities in this most basic of human activities."

Ron Wallingford, author, former Canadian record holder in the 5000m, 3000m steeplechase and marathon.

Caution: Reading these stories could cause you to run a marathon.

Proceeds from the sale of this book will go to the CAN Fund

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