

A photograph of three female marathon runners jumping joyfully on a grassy hill under a clear blue sky. The runner on the left is wearing a pink and black long-sleeved top and black leggings, with a race bib that reads 'KAYE RIV'. The runner in the center is wearing an orange and black long-sleeved top and black leggings, with a race bib that reads 'ALTHEA RIV'. The runner on the right is wearing a black long-sleeved top and red leggings, with a race bib that reads 'SHANNA RIV'. All three runners have their arms raised in the air, and their hair is blowing in the wind. The grass is green and tall, and the sky is a clear, bright blue.

# Valley Harvest Marathon 2020

A Case Study:

Delivering an In-Person COVID-19 Safe event



**VALLEY**

**HARVEST**

**MARATHON**

## Overview

The Blue Nose Marathon took over the management of the Valley Harvest Marathon in 2019.

While following all protocols laid out by the Nova Scotia Government, the team at Blue Nose Marathon worked with the Town of Wolfville, the landowners of the Grand Pre marsh and Valley Harvest Marathon sponsors and suppliers to deliver a small COVID-19 safe event.

The Valley Harvest Marathon occurred over three days to stay within the provincial gathering limit of 250 and offering as many races as possible to the Valley Harvest Marathon participants.

The event occurred on Thanksgiving weekend; October 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup>.



# Goal

- Execute a safe, fun and memorable experience for both our participants and volunteers



# 6 Principles for COVID-19 Safe Event

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- Physical Distancing and Density Reduction
- Touch Point Minimization
- Hygiene
- Education and Communication
- Participant Self Reliance and Education
- Virtual Components







# Leading up to Race Weekend

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## 2. Registration

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- All participants were required to sign a COVID-19 waiver in addition to the participant waiver during registration

### COVID-19 Waiver

The novel coronavirus, COVID-19, has been declared a worldwide pandemic by the World Health Organization. COVID-19 is extremely contagious and is believed to spread mainly from person-to-person contact.

The Valley Harvest Marathon (VHM) has put in place preventative measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 at its event however, VHM cannot guarantee that you or participants of the event will not become infected with COVID-19. Further, participating in the VHM could increase your risk of contracting COVID-19.

By signing this agreement, you acknowledge the contagious nature of COVID-19 and voluntarily assumes the risk that you may be exposed to or infected by COVID-19 by participating in the VHM which may result in personal injury, illness, permanent disability, and death. You understand that the risk of becoming exposed to or infected by COVID-19 by participating in the VHM may result from the actions, omissions, or negligence of others, including, but not limited to, VHM, including its employees and volunteers, and participants and their families.

**I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT AND I AM AWARE THAT BY AGREEING TO THIS WAIVER AGREEMENT I AM GIVING UP CERTAIN SUBSTANTIAL LEGAL RIGHTS INCLUDING THE RIGHT TO SUE.**

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# 3. E-Communication

- All participants received several e-communications prior to Race weekend.
- Each communication included COVID-19 safety protocols.



Only a few more sleeps before race weekend! There are lots of changes this year due to COVID-19, please review the below carefully.

Allow yourself ample time to find parking and get to the start of your race. Click [here](#) to view parking lots in Wolfville. Parking can be found on side streets.

The 10 KM will have two starts. The [race](#) start is Old Dyke Ln. Participants with bib numbers 450 - 575 will start at 8AM. Participants with bib numbers 576 - 701 will start at 8:10AM.

Please do not change waves. We have two waves to maintain physical distancing. As you clear the start line, please stay tight to the right. As well, we ask you run in single file to allow ample room for those who need to pass.

**Pacers are not permitted on any of our routes as these individuals take from our gathering limit of 250.**

When lining up for your race start you will notice three yellow ropes on the ground which have red tape on them to indicate every six feet. Please line up



As we approach race day, we ask you to be very mindful of your health. If you have experienced any of the following:

- have or may have COVID-19
- have symptoms of COVID-19
- have or may have been exposed to COVID-19
- have returned from travel outside the Atlantic bubble in the past 14 days

*Please do not attend the Valley Harvest Marathon.*

Again, we are trying to deliver a very safe event during this pandemic for our participants, volunteers, staff, and community. We are privileged to be able to have the Valley Harvest Marathon. We are asking for your help and ask that you do your part to keep our community safe. #InThisTogether

Our volunteers. Year after year, we have an extremely dedicated group of volunteers who make the Valley Harvest Marathon happen each year. Please be sure to take a moment and thank them.

If you have any questions please reach out to us at 902.496.1889 or via email [admin@valleyharvestmarathon.ca](mailto:admin@valleyharvestmarathon.ca).

Please continue to follow Federal and Provincial guidelines to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.



## 4. Kit Pick Up

- Kit Pick up was offered 4 days to spread out the mass of participants; two days in Dartmouth and 2 days in Wolfville
- Kit Pick was not permitted on Race weekend also to alleviate any mass and congestion



# 5. Race Kits

- All Participants received an infographic postcard highlighting changes they would see on race day due to COVID-19



## CHANGES YOU WILL SEE FOR 2020



### FACE MASKS

Face masks will be required at all times in the event site\*, including at the start and finish line.



### PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Participants must maintain physical distance of 2m/6ft at all times.



### SPECTATORS

Spectators are not permitted in the event site\*, including the start and finish line.



### SANITIZATION

Hand sanitizer stations will be placed throughout the event site\*.



### AID STATIONS

All aid stations will be self serve and use bottled water, requiring participants to grab their own hydration.



### POST RACE

Participants must put on their mask upon finishing and before taking their medal/water/nutrition.

\* Event site refers to Wolfville Waterfront Park



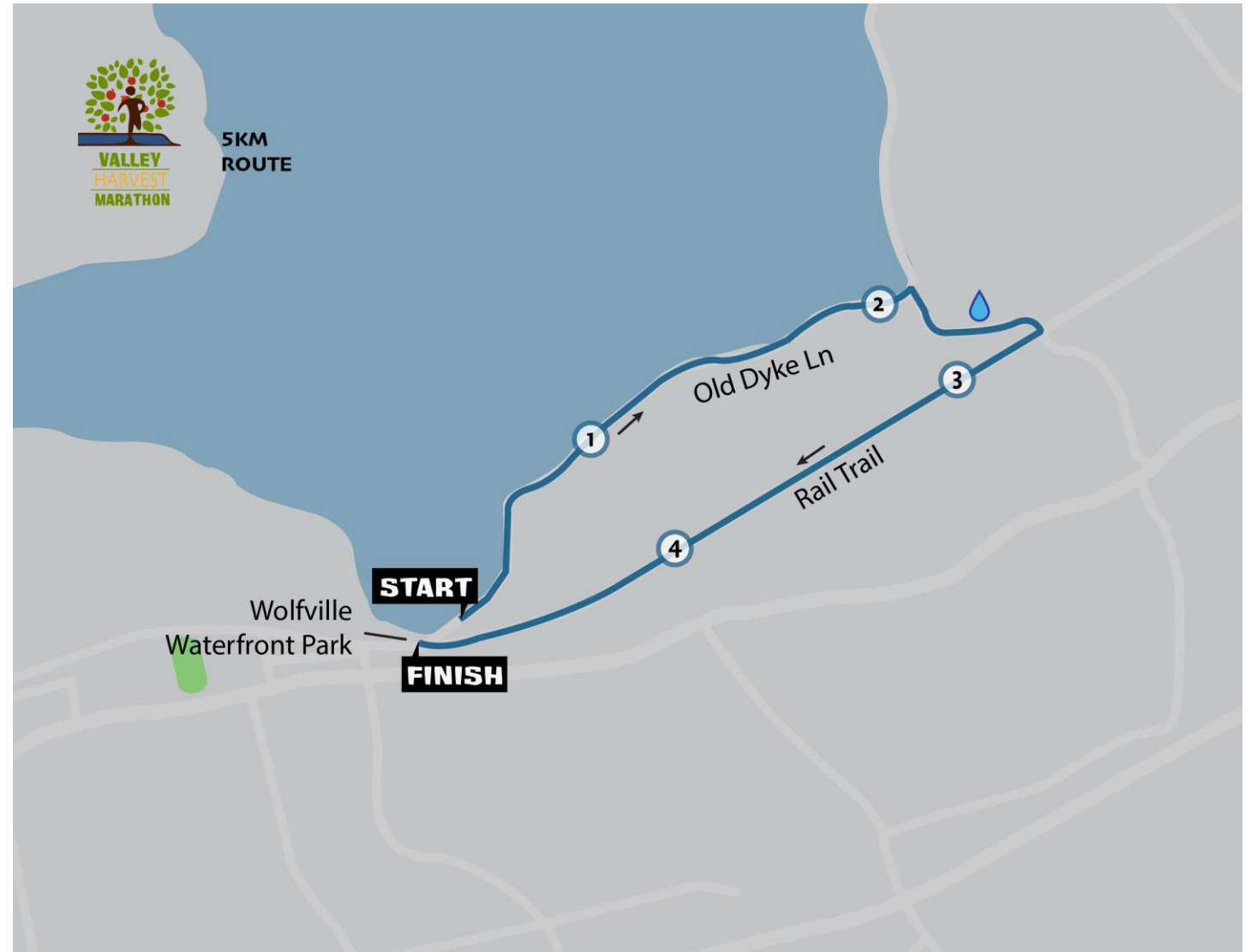
# Race Weekend

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# 1. Route Designs

- All routes were modified to create a loop preventing any cross over of participants that typically occurs with out and back routes





## 2. Race Starts

- Results based on chip time, not gun time, alleviating the need for participants to crowd the start line
- Races were spread across 3 days:
  - 5KM on Friday evening
  - 10KM on Saturday morning
  - Marathon and Half Marathon on Sunday morning
- Wave starts for all races:
  - 2 waves for the 5KM & 10KM with 125 participants per wave
  - 1 wave for Marathon with 100 participants
  - 1 wave for Half Marathon with 125 participants



# 3. Physical Distancing

- Ropes were placed on the ground 6 feet apart to assist participants with physical distancing at the start line for each race
- Each rope was then marked every 6 feet for participants to line up by





## 4. Masks at Start & Finish Line

- Participants were required to wear a mask at the start line
- Masks could be removed after crossing the start line
- Some participants opted to keep their mask on for the duration of their race
- Participants were required to put their mask on when they crossed the finish line when entering Wolfville Waterfront Park





## 5. Hand Sanitizer

- Hand sanitizer was placed at high traffic areas; medals, food, hydration, portable washrooms







## 6. Self Serve Stations

- Participants were required to collect their own hydration, food and medals
- Stations on course were also self serve
- Volunteers were on hand to replenish supplies only





# 7. Volunteers

- All volunteers were given masks, sanitizer and gloves
- All volunteers at the event site were required to wear masks
- Course marshal volunteers were not required to wear masks







## 8. No Spectators

- Spectators were not permitted near the start and finish line.
- Spectators were not permitted at the event site, Wolfville Waterfront Park



# Challenges

- **Efficiencies:**
  - Less efficient due to staging event over three days versus historical one day coupled with significantly less participants 750 in 2020 compared to 3,042 in 2019
- **Controlling Costs:**
  - New costs were incurred with less participants to help cover those costs







## Additional Changes due to COVID-19

- Virtual option added for all race distances
- Kids Run that historically has 1,000 participants was offered virtually only
- Expo was not offered in 2020
- Ultra Marathon was not offered in 2020
- Event site was 100% outdoors





**VALLEY**

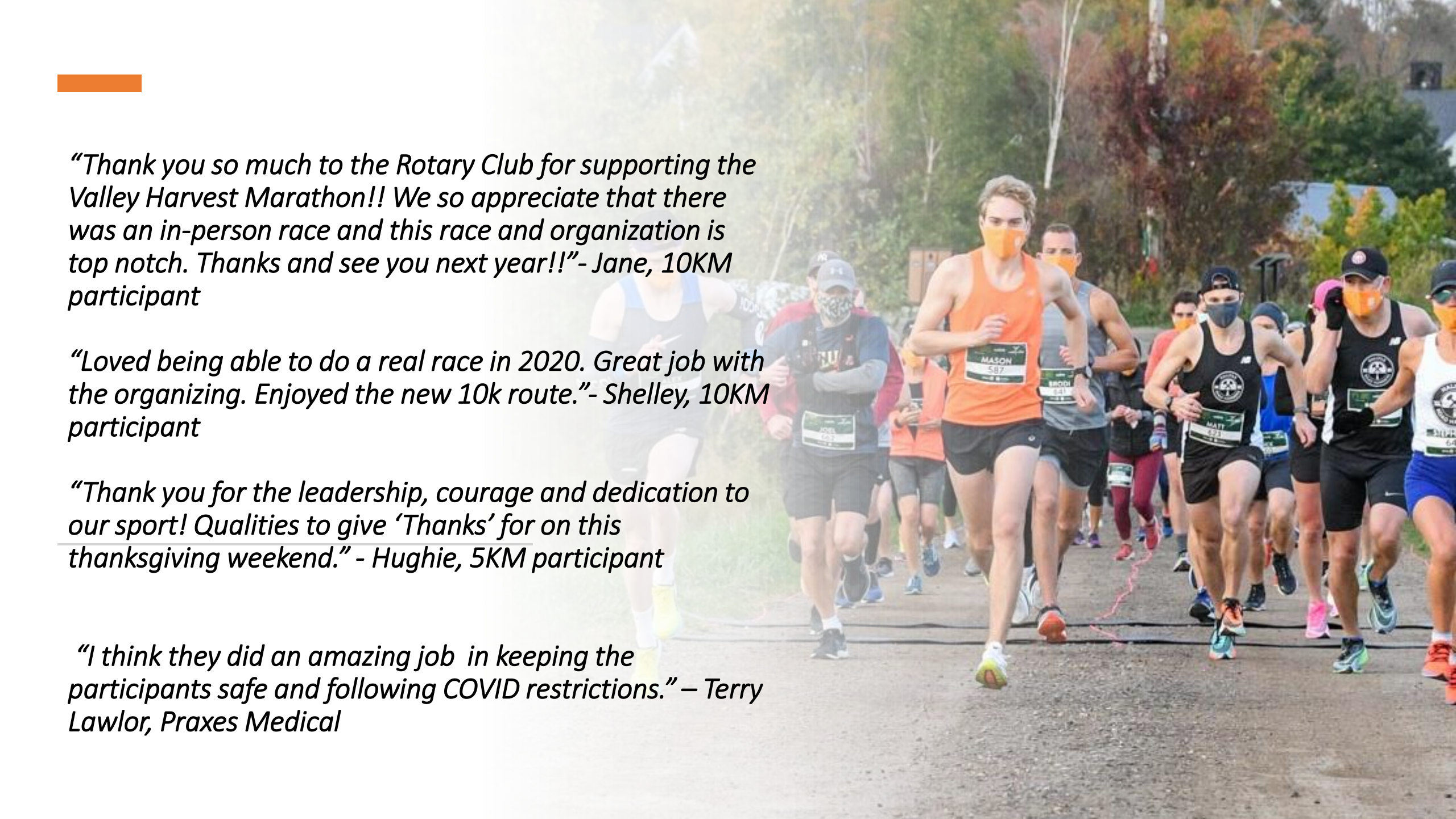
**HARVEST**

**MARATHON**

## Outcomes

- Zero reported COVID-19 cases due to this 3-day event
- Maintained a safe event for participants, volunteers, suppliers and staff
- Participant feedback was extremely positive with participants so grateful for an in-person race
- Participants respected and followed all COVID-19 safety protocols put in place
- Sold out 3-day events with a wait list in place





*“Thank you so much to the Rotary Club for supporting the Valley Harvest Marathon!! We so appreciate that there was an in-person race and this race and organization is top notch. Thanks and see you next year!!”- Jane, 10KM participant*

*“Loved being able to do a real race in 2020. Great job with the organizing. Enjoyed the new 10k route.”- Shelley, 10KM participant*

*“Thank you for the leadership, courage and dedication to our sport! Qualities to give ‘Thanks’ for on this thanksgiving weekend.” - Hughie, 5KM participant*

*“I think they did an amazing job in keeping the participants safe and following COVID restrictions.” – Terry Lawlor, Praxes Medical*