

M2M attracts over 500 runners, a new record



Half marathoners in the first mile of their race.

Nicole Bruce and Matt Lindsey crossing the M2M finish line after running a marathon. They then got married! They wanted M2M to be part of their day... signs from friends said "Race to the Altar!" (James Evans, photos)



The annual running event between Fort Stockton and Marathon was a huge success, according to race director Marci Roberts.

This year, the October 22 race boasted a record 502 runners, a tremendous increase from the fewer than 100 participants when Roberts became race director in 2011.

"M2M 2011 had not one racer from Marathon; they were volunteers," noted Roberts. "Now, the volunteers and other townspeople want to run/walk [in the event]; we had fourteen racers from Marathon. One of those placed second in the overall men's 10k: Zane Roberts."

Runners come from all over Texas and some from elsewhere in the country to participate in either the full marathon (26.2 miles), half marathon, 10k (10 km/6.2 miles), or 5k (5 km/3.1 miles). There is always a strong showing of Austin runners who love the excuse to come to Marathon for the weekend. The usually good weather

this time of year, friendly and mellow town atmosphere, and the fact that marathon runners can use this race to qualify for the Boston Marathon are all significant draws.

One of Roberts' favorite race categories is the 80-90 age group. "Marathon matriarchs Julia Pinedo and Pat Martin walk to a standing ovation to receive their award. Julia's whole family walks with her; they all have matching shirts. It is a family affair. This year their walk was dedicated to Javier Pinedo, Julia's son who died suddenly this year."

Local massage therapists were on hand near the finish line to offer 15-minute massage therapy sessions for a fee. Said massage therapist Marlys Hersey (also editor of The Gazette), "I always enjoy working on runners at the M2M finish. To help them loosen their muscles and relax after such an intense endeavor is a real treat. But also, individual runners' stories of their experience of the event, and what drew them to M2M are always riveting. One guy from Portland, Oregon ran the full marathon to celebrate turning 60; unfortunately it was one of those days when his running was really hard, he 'just wasn't feeling it,' and yet he still loved the experience, being out on this particular course. Several runners recognized me and Elizabeth [Malloy, LMT] from previous M2Ms and were pleased to have us work on them again. The last runner I worked on that afternoon was a woman who just had brain surgery in July, and has been working diligently ever since to reclaim her physical strength and athleticism. She was planning to run 'just' the 10k, and then just a few days before the event, she decided 'Why not run the half marathon?' Stories like that are incredibly humbling and inspiring."

In addition to participating in the actual run of their choice, runners enjoy several other hallmarks of this event: great scenery in the wide open desert of West Texas, excellent support along the route, shuttle services, emergency services, a pasta feed/social gathering the night before, high-quality long-sleeve race shirts, a post-race meal and awards ceremony, and great volunteer and spectator enthusiasm. Often, runners continue the post-race celebration all afternoon and evening, enjoying, in essence, a weekend-long party in Marathon.

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