

# Chris Walton

## Event Coordinator for Manitoba | Running Room Canada Inc

As Running Room's event coordinator in Manitoba, Chris has been organizing popular local and national annual road running events since 2015 including *Resolution Run*, *Hypothermic Half Marathon*, *Run for Women (Winnipeg and Regina)*, *Break Free (Winnipeg and Saskatoon)*, *Canada Day Run Winnipeg*, *Winnipeg 10&10*, *Mud, Sweat and Beers*, and *Run Crew Relay*.

Running Room also sponsors numerous other races throughout the year and Chris' additional role is to assist the many charities and organizations that host these events through the lending of equipment, race day support, online registration, promotion, and consultation. The result has formed many lasting relationships, not to mention providing a wealth of experience and insight into racing in Manitoba. It is not uncommon for Chris to be involved with approximately 50 races per year (excluding 2020).

Most races are in support of a worthwhile cause or charity. For Chris, the most inspiring part is seeing communities come together in a very unified way that is displayed, quite literally, at the finish line from the faces showing elation, anguish, and accomplishment. Combined with the tally of real donation dollars that affect real everyday Manitobans, this realization gives us drive and perpetual direction forward towards a better life.

Chris has been a runner for most of his adult life and with his entire family running at various points in their own lives, it was easy to see the joy and benefits if offered. He began running around 2001 and has fond memories of his earliest races alongside his brother, Michael. Races such as CN Tracks of Glory and the half at Manitoba Marathon. While born in Winnipeg, his shoes took most of their wear running in Edmonton and Montreal where he studied, performed and earned music degrees. After graduating from McGill University in 2009, he continued as a sideman and leader of various music groups on the high seas aboard cruise ships for several years. And all the while running. Running in the Alaskan mountains, running in unknown lands, running on treadmills each day while on a ship that was determined to throw him off balance. After years spent at sea, Chris wanted to plant some roots and decided to return to his hometown of Winnipeg in 2014.

Now on solid ground, Chris sought a new direction and when the event coordinator position became available in 2015, he saw an opportunity to be part of the running community since, to date, his running was done in solitude, always travelling. Hiring manager and area manager at the time, Rachel Munday, along with Kenaston location store manager and mother, Lorraine Walton, had been invaluable in offering a wealth of knowledge and experience which aided Chris' transition. They continue to be a source of inspiration.

Since then, Chris has had the privilege of race directing or volunteering at countless events in a city and community that is unwavering in support of this sport. Throughout 2020 and into 2021, the company and industry as a whole were forced to revue the racing model and take a hard-microscopic look at the participant experience from start to finish. In a bittersweet sense, he looks forward to how this will propel the sport forward with a more promising future