

Rachel Munday

Rachel is well-known to the Manitoba running community as the Executive Director of the Manitoba Marathon, a position she has held since 2015. Prior to that, Rachel was the regional manager and events coordinator for the Running Room for Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and organized 4-5 races a year on its behalf as well as working to assist race directors with an additional 30+ events on the race calendar. So how did this working Mom get to this career as a builder in the running community?

As a young girl and through her early adult life, Rachel was a dancer. In her early 30's, when marriage and children made dancing impractical to maintain, she was inspired by a friend who had heard a motivational speech about Jean's Marines, a group of women who trained together to participate in the Marine Corps Marathon in Washington, D.C. at the end of October. They did it for their health and fitness but also in support of cancer survivors. Rachel and her friend organized a wider group of female friends into a running group to train for Marine Corps. They discovered to their dismay that this very popular marathon sells out in March each year, and so they were too late to get into the race that year. As an alternative, Rachel and some of the group of 12 – 15 women entered the Manitoba Marathon half marathon in 2004. They trained by starting with one and one – 1 minute of running, 1 minute of walking – and worked their way up to running long distances. Those who did not do the half marathon entered relay teams. Not being able to enter Marine Corps, they opted for the Queen City Marathon that autumn. They stayed together and did 4 - 5 events each year.

A year after starting her running program, Rachel took a part-time job at the Running Room on Kenaston and Grant. A year after that, she was the full-time manager of that store. She got to know the running community, through staff, customers and the various running clubs. She then took on the role of regional manager for the Running Room for Manitoba and Saskatchewan. In that role, she was responsible for organizing the running events that Running Room offers in this region as well as supporting and advising race directors who partnered with the Running Room.

In 2010, a group of employees from the Kenaston store entered the Marine Corps Marathon, a memorable trip and experience. In addition to seeing the amazing sights of the DC area, Rachel noticed the armed security guards, and rooftop snipers, located through the route. And this was before the Boston bombing. The

race ends with a steep climb up to the statue for Iwo Jima. Rachel says there were marines standing all along the rise on either side, cajoling the runners not to stop running before the end. Rachel wanted to walk, but the pressure was too great and she continued running to the finish line. This event was probably Rachel's most memorable, and favourite, running experience.

Rachel has run races in Toronto, Whistler, Minneapolis and elsewhere, in addition to many of the races on the Manitoba race calendar. As a race organizer, she has met and worked with and learned from many race directors from around the continent. One of her most challenging races to organize was her final race before leaving the Running Room to take over the Manitoba Marathon. The Hypothermic Half Marathon of 2015 had wind chills in excess of -40 and the course had to be modified for safety reasons, allowing people to end their run when continuing could be unsafe. The route became loops of Fort Whyte. A couple of days later, she was leading the Manitoba Marathon. In the first of those that she was organizing from the beginning (ie. 2016), there was a forecast of major thundershowers from midnight Saturday until mid-afternoon on race day. The thunderstorms poured through the night, but at 5:30, the skies miraculously cleared, contrary to the radar and the forecast and the race went off as scheduled. Of course, 2020 and 2021 have been challenging, too.

Rachel's favourite memory from her years at the Manitoba Marathon is hosting the national half marathon championships in 2019, a chance to showcase our wonderful event to a lot of people who had never participated in the Manitoba Marathon before. Fifty runners came from across the country to compete, and not one of them had run Manitoba before. Every single one raved about their experience after. Unfortunately, a virus prevented us from hosting those championships again in 2020 or 2021.

Rachel is a wonderful ambassador for our sport in our Province. She shows that one does not need elite speed to be a leading figure in the road racing community.