

From Runner to Writer

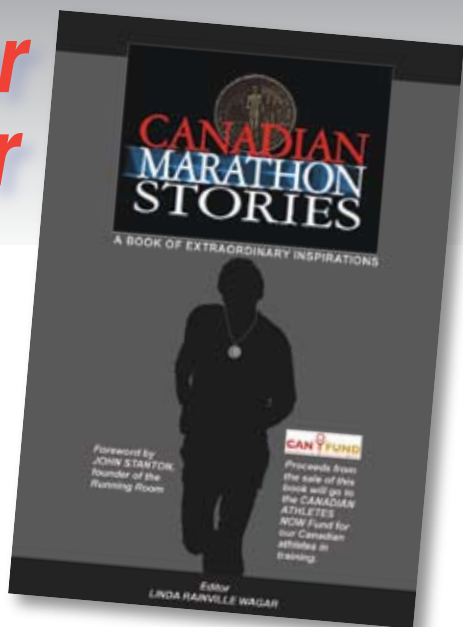
By *Linda Rainville Wagar*

What is it about Ottawa and runners? My only regret is not having started to run earlier. I have no doubt that running in all seasons improved my health and well-being.

“Run a marathon?” Never in a million years. Until I changed my thinking and replaced it with the word, “maybe”. Running a marathon is hard. If it wasn’t, everyone would tackle this challenge. Running in Ottawa enables me to embrace the distance, if only for five hours, and preferably less. On any given day, I take whatever time I can. Running changed my life; it empowered me.

After starting and completing a 42.2K distance marathon, I discussed an idea with runners and non-runners alike. The feedback I received was varied, from “You go girl!”, to “Why bother?” Well, in Ottawa the roads are filled with inspiration. I decided to spread it around and see what happens.

Struck with the vision of assembling stories from across Canada, I launched a website called www.canadianmarathonstories.ca. The stories submitted would inspire, entertain and motivate. My ultimate goal was to publish a book called, “Canadian Marathon Stories”. This was my finish line — a book — which would offer stories from across Canada, written by Canadians



of all shapes and sizes, giving us their honest, inspirational, moving accounts of experiencing the marathon journey. The final rendition is a collection of 31 stories, and five are written by runners in the greater Ottawa region. This book is not just about the running. There are stories that are inside each and every one of us, no matter what the sport. Stories continue to be submitted; maybe some day there will be a sequel.

Businesses have embraced the concept that selling this book is also about giving back to our Canadian athletes. Ten dollars from each book sold (retail price is \$20) is being donated to the Canadian Athletes Now fund, a non-profit organization that helps athletes with their coaching, training, nutrition and travel expenses. The book is being launched in several cities, including Ottawa, where it is available at Collected Works Bookstore, Metcalfe Massage Clinic, New Balance, The Running Room,

Ottawa Orthotic Lab, and Sports 4. By purchasing *Canadian Marathon Stories*, you will help put medals around the necks of our Canadian athletes.

Seems like the perfect ending to a different kind of marathon; glad I went for it, glad I surrounded myself to the chorus of, "You go girl!" **HWO**

Linda Rainville Wagar started to run only eight years ago to keep up with her 2 young children. She has taught 10K and 21.1K running clinics, and is co-instructing & leading a 42.2K clinic this spring. It is her way of giving back to a running community that has given her so much. Visit www.canadianmarathonstories.ca.

Dr. MICHEL BASTIEN Dr. HARRY PRIZANT

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