

Local marathoners? second annual Run to the CN Tower raises \$8,530 for the Aurora Food Pantry



Taylor Wright and Nem Vas love running marathons and raising money for charity.

The local long-distance runners completed their Second Annual Fundraising Marathon in late August and raised \$8,530 for the Aurora Food Pantry.

As Wright and Vas noted on their website prior to their challenging 42.2 kilometer run from Aurora to Toronto, "We are excited to announce that we are going to be running our Second Annual Fundraising Marathon. In doing so, we have started this page to help fundraise for our local food bank?The Aurora Food Bank."

The marathoners' fundraising goal of \$5,000 this year was surpassed impressively. Donations ranging from \$5 to \$500 rolled in from online supporters who were clearly moved to action by the pair's charitable initiative.

The charity drive drew to a close on August 31 with over 118 supporters donating to the worthy cause. The donors, according to Wright, included "friends, family, bar patrons, and co-workers?"it truly was a grassroots neighborhood effort." The generosity of the community was not lost on Wright's running partner when we discussed the campaign in a comfortable booth at The Filly and Company.

Nem Vas noted that "The Aurora Food Pantry has its peak needs and our supporters really came through this year in our Second Annual Marathon. We want to continue this as a Fun Run in our third year in 2024 in order to grow the event and raise more funds for a good cause. Our donors exceeded our expectations this year as we raised \$3530 more than our \$5K goal."

Wright expressed relief that their fundraising goals were met and acknowledged that she "had the jitters before the race."

"Whenever you're starting something?especially athletically?there's always an enjoyable adrenaline rush and then the satisfaction of accomplishing the run. There was also the euphoria at the beginning and the nice feeling that comes with a runner's high."

The amiable marathoner also noted subtly that one of the best parts of the experience for her was "the beer afterwards."

Wright's running partner Nem Vas offered a similar appraisal of the best parts of their running and fundraising experience.

?Besides the cold beer, I enjoyed waking up early and seeing the cities we were running through as they were waking up. Going from no cars on the road at 5 a.m. in Aurora to our arrival in busy traffic at 10 a.m. at the CN Tower was a cool experience, too.?

Their shared description of the 42.2 kilometer charity run from The Filly on Yonge Street in Aurora to the CN Tower in downtown Toronto bordered on the idyllic in terms of glittering urban imagery. As they jogged down the Longest Street in Canada, both Wright and Vas witnessed streetlights turning off in unison, the sun rising over the cities, and households stirring to activity as residents woke up.

Based on their uplifting experience, Wright and Vas encouraged local residents to fall in love with running, too.

They suggested that to ?fully enjoy the experience of long distance running,? new participants need to ?find a running buddy, join a running community to set a date and maintain accountability, and enjoy the social dimension of membership.?

Both Wright and Vas also suggested ?starting very slowly to build towards a half marathon?to start out running slowly and build up to 30-minute runs and raise the running times incrementally.?

Both marathoners, who took up half-marathon running and training two years ago, completed their first marathon in August of 2022.

Ultimately, in addition to establishing these running goals, the two masterful fundraisers reminded residents of the pressing need for food donations in Aurora.

?We encourage local residents to donate to the Food Pantry, even though our charity drive is over. The Food Pantry has peak needs and one of those peak times, when donations are most needed, is in September when the kids go back to school.?

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter