



Lighthouse bows out of race

Organizers choose not to do marathon a second year



The Run the Bear Marathon organized by The Lighthouse Project in September 2009 was the last for the organization. (KATHY PORTIE/Big Bear Grizzly)

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The Big Bear Marathon by any name is no more—at least for now.

The Lighthouse Project organized the marathon in 2009, the second year of the event, taking over for HBT Sports, which dropped the event after one year. "The marathon was a Lighthouse thing," says Beth Gardner of The Lighthouse Project. But it was a departure from the group's plan, she says.

Plans were to organize an event called Run Ryan's Run for May, but when the original organizers for the marathon dropped out, the city of Big Bear Lake asked The Lighthouse Project to step in. Gardner says it was agreed, but the Project still wanted to do Run Ryan's Run.

Run Ryan's Run involves Ryan Hall, Olympian and professional marathoner who grew up and began his running career in Big Bear Lake. Prior to Hall's trip to the Beijing Olympics in August 2008, The Lighthouse Project organized Move a Million Miles for Ryan Hall. Ryan's Run is similar, and takes participants around the lake, the first run Hall made.

Unfortunately, Run Ryan's Run was put on the back burner to make way for the marathon, Gardner says. The Lighthouse Project picked up the marathon late in the game and had to focus a lot of time, energy and resources to make it happen, Gardner says.

Another kink found its way into the Run Ryan's Run plan when Big Bear was granted a stop on the AMGEN Tour of California bicycle race in May 2010, the only time Hall was available that year, Gardner says. The Lighthouse Project hoped to work with AMGEN and other promoters to build the Run Ryan's Run event into the time frame as well, but the organizers were so busy with the marathon it didn't work out, Gardner says.

"We were disappointed because we lost the opportunity," Gardner says. She says The Lighthouse Project team asked themselves if they couldn't do Run Ryan's Run why were they doing running events? While the organization was pleased with the marathon and the incredible support of the community and the volunteers, when they looked to see if it aligned with The Lighthouse Project mission, it didn't, Gardner says.

So, The Lighthouse Project bowed out gracefully and early, allowing time if another group wants to step in to put together the marathon for 2010. At this time, Gardner isn't aware of any organizations or individuals who have expressed interest.

Rick Bates, Events Resource Office manager, says there are some ideas in the works that might take the place of the marathon on the weekend following Labor Day. Putting a marathon on is very expensive, Bates says. The traffic study alone due to road closures is about \$10,000.

Bates says his office is working with other local events organizers on a possible mountain trail run for late summer or early fall. It's possibly a fit for the weekend the marathon was held, he says.

Run Ryan's Run won't occur in 2010 either. Hall isn't available, but Gardner is working with the Olympian to find a date for 2011. She is hoping to involve the entire Hall family of runners.

In the meantime, Gardner and The Lighthouse Project team is focused on the third annual community summit set for Feb. 24. A guest speaker hasn't been selected yet, but the format will be the same as the 2009 summit.

In 2010, The Lighthouse Project's big focus will be on the peace gardens at the three elementary schools, Gardner says. Soroptimist International of Big Bear Valley has also partnered with The Lighthouse Project to bring **Peace Builders** to Big Bear Middle School. The goal is to create an entire **Peace Builders** community in the Valley, Gardner says.

She says if adults are asking children to follow the **Peace Builders** program and use the program's language in daily life, adults need to follow suit and model their own behavior accordingly.