

Press release

10 Nov 2016

Munich Marathon to be honoured in Athens on Friday for its Running Integration initiative launched in 2015

The 21st World Congress of AIMS honors Munich's commitment for refugees

Greece is the cradle of the marathon and on 11 Nov 2016, people with a long-term impact on their sport will be honoured at the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center (SNFCC) in Athens. The award winners are the most inspiring athletes on the annual sporting calendar, including Gernot Weigl, the power behind the Munich Marathon. The marathon, which again attracted over 20,000 runners to Munich in 2016, will be bestowed the Social Award by the Association of International Marathons and Distance Races (AIMS). The honour will be awarded at the AIMS world congress and other winners will include the long distance Ethiopian runner Haile Gebrselassie (for his lifetime achievements in the sport), the Kenyan Eliud Kipchoge (2016 winner of the marathons in London and Rio de Janeiro; marathon winner at the Olympics) and the Kenyan runner Jemima Sumgong (also Olympic winner in the women's event).

The awards will not just be honouring the fastest times in marathons themselves; the idea is also to acknowledge outstanding initiatives. The work carried out by AIMS revolves around the eight Millennium Development Goals set by the United Nations as part of a drive to make the world a better place. AIMS has praised the projects organised by the Munich Marathon for the emphasis placed on refugee integration. The Running Integration project is called *Laufend Integrieren* in German, a play on words meaning both 'running' and 'ongoing' integration.

Munich was one of the main German cities that refugees flocked to in the summer of 2015 in a rush to escape war and poverty in their home country. At one point, specially organised trains were bringing thousands of refugees to Munich Main Station each day. Only weeks later, it was the Munich Marathon and many refugees were to be found working as stewards along the route. Some even summoned up the courage to take part in the event itself (marathon, half marathon, 10 kilometre run). The Munich Marathon was quick to leap into action, working alongside the Munich social services department and a variety of aid organisations to set up its own programme. The aim was to allow refugees to become closely involved in the event.

"The young refugees had always been in situations in which they had to receive help from others – now they could give something back," states Gernot Weigl, describing the enthusiasm of the refugees who helped with the event. The refugees stood shoulder to shoulder with the members of clubs from the surrounding region of Bavaria, helping out with refreshments along the route and dealing with organisational tasks in the Olympic stadium.

Press Desk:

runabout MÜNCHEN MARATHON GmbH

Boschetsrieder Strasse 69, 81379 Munich, Germany

+49 (0) 89/17 09 55 71, Fax: + 49 (0) 89/17 09 55 72

presse@muenchenmarathon.de; www.muenchenmarathon.de

Press release



The refugees did not just feature as friendly helpers at the Munich Marathon. No less than 76 refugees took part in a race in 2015 and 2016, which was free to enter. The programme of events also included detailed preparation work before the marathons got underway and in keeping with the Running Integration concept, helpers were always welcome to join in.

Wristbands were on offer at the marathon show in the Olympic Hall and these were available online. Thanks to revenues and contributions made by sponsors over the past year, the event organisers succeeded in raising 30,000 euros in aid of refugee causes and this money has been donated to the social services department in Munich.

“Munich Marathon’s initiative is a great example of how running events can help tackle the great challenges of our time,” states Paco Borao, the President of AIMS, which currently represents over 400 running event organisers worldwide. In previous years the Tokyo Marathon and the Great Ethiopian Run have also been winners of the AIMS Social Award.

“We’ve made new friends and witnessed some moving scenes in Munich,” states Gernot Weigl, the Munich Marathon race director. Naturally the intention is to keep the Running Integration initiative alive. “In fact we’re even expanding it,” states Gernot Weigl. “A big topic on the 2017 agenda will be inclusion. We also want to do more to involve people with disabilities in Munich Marathon in the future.”

The Munich Marathon

The Munich Marathon has been staged by runabout MÜNCHEN MARATHON GmbH since 2000 and is now considered a traditional event on the annual city calendar. It always takes part one week before the famous Oktoberfest beer festival and is one of the top five marathon events in Germany. Over 20,000 sports enthusiasts take part in the marathon each year, which runs around a circuit of the most important sights in the regional state capital of Bavaria. The finishing line is in the Munich Olympic Stadium and to coincide with the event, there is a three-day sports fair attracting up to 50,000 visitors each year plus an international fun run in traditional costumes on the day before the marathon.

About AIMS

AIMS is a member-based organisation that was established in 1982 and now has more 410 members. Its members include the world’s leading distance races in over 110 countries and territories on every continent on the planet. The three key objectives of AIMS are:

1. To foster and promote distance running throughout the world
2. To work with the International Association of Athletic Federations (IAAF) on all matters relating to international road races
3. To exchange information, knowledge and expertise among the members of the association

MÜNCHEN MARATHON partners:



Landeshauptstadt
München



/Flughafen
München



Press Desk:

runabout MÜNCHEN MARATHON GmbH

Boschetsrieder Strasse 69, 81379 Munich, Germany

+49 (0) 89/17 09 55 71, Fax: + 49 (0) 89/17 09 55 72

presse@muenchenmarathon.de; www.muenchenmarathon.de