

## **Sedona Marathon says “Get off the Couch”**

For the 2007 season the Sedona Marathon has created a program designed to get all of Sedona moving. Based on their success with last year’s *Biggest Loser Challenge*, the new training program called *Get off the Couch* begins Monday October 2<sup>nd</sup>.

For many locals the 2006 Marathon marked their first time participating in an athletic event. Even most of the team members involved in the *Biggest Loser Challenge* weren’t your run of the mill racers. In fact, 90% of them had never been runners and in the end the winning team had dropped a whopping 47 inches over the six-week period.

This year the marathon has a bigger goal in mind and to help people get started they have designed “*Get off the Couch*”. “We want to create a healthier Northern Arizona, starting with Sedona and the Verde Valley.” Says race Director Dr. Bill Lionberger. “For us this is about more than the event, it is encouraging and supporting a healthy lifestyle for the greater Verde Valley. The *Get off the Couch* program is a step in this direction.”

The program is aimed both at seasoned runners who are already training for next year’s marathon and also people who just want to get back in shape. Participants from all levels will be given training, and nutrition tips from Race Director Dr. Bill Lionberger and other local experts.

“We want to create a community of health in a relaxed friendly atmosphere. Something doable for everyone.” states Race Director Karen Livesay, “Every time you pick up a newspaper or turn on the news you hear about the growing obesity epidemic in the United States. Imagine going into the holidays or starting next year already in better shape that you were at Labor Day.”

The whole emphasis for the Marathon with this program is on getting Sedona moving and active. More advanced athletes can expect pacing and stride tips as well as other useful

information. Beginners much needed support and encouragement. In addition to walking every other Monday with the group, they will be encouraged to walk at least three times a week to start.

A world-class athlete himself, Lionberger knows the value of community support. “In the long run we would like to create a strong runners club in Sedona,” remarks Lionberger. “A club that embraces all levels of athleticism.”

People came from all over the globe to participate in last year’s event. Not all do the full marathon. There are also 5k and half-marathon races. Participants are allowed to walk the races as well. For example, last year local realtor Amy D. Brown’s whole family participated in the 5k including her son Jake and daughter Mary ages 5 and 6 respectively. “The marathon was a great event for my family,” says Brown. “It was an event that I know they will remember for all of their lives.” Brown’s team also happened to win the *Biggest Loser Challenge*. Her family plans on being a part of this year’s event as well.

For other Sedonans this was their first full marathon. Tom Johnson, publisher of Sedona Magazine, found himself incredibly moved the end of the marathon. “ Participating in the marathon was a wonderful experience. I was proud to achieve my goal of 4 hours and 30 minutes.” Says Johnson, “As much fun as preparing for it with my friends and teammates was, it was even more exhilarating seeing my family at the finish line.”

The marathon is inviting people who would like to be a part of the “*Get off the Couch*” community to meet at the Sedona Red Rock High School track every other Monday from 5:30 -6:30 pm beginning October 2<sup>nd</sup>. There Livesay and Lionberger will be on hand to give fitness and nutrition tips and more importantly provide support and encouragement.

Additionally, as part of their commitment to Sedona Community they have designated the Sedona School District, The Sedona Charter School and the Sedona Charter Montessori Scholl as the local charity recipients of the 2007 Marathon.

The 2007 Sedona Marathon takes place on Saturday February 10<sup>th</sup>. More information is available on how to raise money for the schools by going to either the Sedona Oak Creek School District or Sedona Marathon websites. For more information or how to register or volunteer for the 2007 Sedona Marathon go to [www.sedonamarathon.com](http://www.sedonamarathon.com) or call 1-800-775-7671.