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## Road race, fun run support aboriginal youth programs

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By Tom Ayers

THE sixth annual CN Tracks of Glory Road Race and Fun Run is ready to head out of the blocks, and this year's event will be bigger and better than ever.

The road race, which attracts up to 300 participants and raises nearly \$3,000 annually for aboriginal youth programs in Winnipeg, is getting a boost from its sponsor.

"This year is particularly exciting because CN is going to match the funds and effectively double them," said the railway company's spokesperson, Kathryn Sawatzky.

And that prospect has excited staff at the Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata family resource centre, which will benefit from the proceeds of the road race.

"We've been madly recruiting families and staff to run in this," said Michelle Boivin, Ma Mawi director of communications.

The 10-kilometre road race is expected to attract some top athletes, as it is sanctioned by Athletics Manitoba and will serve as the provincial 10-K championship. Medals will be handed out for the top three male and top three female runners in several age categories. The race will include a 5-K fun run or walk, for those who are less competitive but still interested in helping raise funds for the centre.

Boivin said the race, which starts at 10 a.m. this Sunday at the Assiniboine Park duck pond, sets an important example for aboriginal youth, many of whom are susceptible to diseases such as diabetes that can be controlled through regular exercise.

It also raises funds for programs such as the aboriginal Scout group downtown and Ma Mawi's Pow Wow Club, both of which help connect aboriginal youth with their own culture.

Ma Mawi also runs a variety of other programs for aboriginal families and youth, depending on the needs of the community.

"If there's an opportunity to build community values and support aboriginal youth then we do that," Boivin said.

Last year's event raised \$5,000, which went toward free, positive summer cultural and recreational programs. Over 400 children and youth participated and benefited from CN's contribution. Activities included watersliding, an auto theft awareness workshop followed by go-carting, day camps, movies, sweat lodge ceremonies and beach outings, among other things.

"As you can see, the impact of this donation was really far reaching," said Boivin. "It is through these kinds of positive partnerships that meaningful opportunities are provided for our young people to become healthy, contributing members of our community."

Sawatzky said race participants who register early enough will receive a package of goodies from sponsors as well as a long-sleeved T-shirt. Registration will be available on race day at Assiniboine Park,

but the limited number of tee shirts may be gone by then. A minimum of \$20 in pledges is required to enter. Runners will also be eligible for a wide range of prizes, including two free passes from WestJet.

Refreshments will be available after the run, along with demonstrations of aboriginal youth dance.

To register, call Kathryn at 934-7455 or visit [www.cn.ca/community](http://www.cn.ca/community) and look under the Events heading.

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