

## NEW GARDEN SPOT VILLAGE MARATHON AWARDS STRUCTURE ATTRACTS SENIOR ATHLETES

*20 percent of registered participants are age 50 or better*

**NEW HOLLAND, Pa. — Mar. 24, 2011** — A new awards structure that recognizes runners in age brackets up to 85 and beyond appears to be attracting a high number of “masters” to the annual Garden Spot Village Marathon, which will be held this year on Sat., Apr. 9, starting and finishing on the campus of the retirement community at 433 S. Kinzer Ave.

Currently, 168 of the 868 registered participants are over the age of 50; the oldest is 76.

“One couple in their 70s is coming in from the West Coast for the marathon,” said Scott Miller, race director and director of marketing at Garden Spot Village. “Another couple that is traveling up for the event are 69 and 75.”

Believed to be the first marathon ever hosted by a retirement community, the Garden Spot Village Marathon has always acknowledged the achievements of older runners with equal cash awards in four marathon categories: Men Overall, Women Overall, Men 50-plus and Women 50-plus. In each category, awards are \$500 and a trophy for first place, with trophies for second and third place.

In addition to the unique cash award structure, the marathon previously offered first, second and third-place awards for men and women in age categories, in five-year increments, ranging from ages 13-19 to age 70-plus. This year, the age category awards have been extended to recognize the individual achievements of men and women runners ages 65 to 69, 70 to 74, 75 to 79, 80 to 84, and 85-plus.

“We are always looking for ways to encourage participation regardless of age. The point is to stay active,” said Miller. “From the beginning, we welcomed walkers and relay teams. Last year we added the half marathon to make the event even more accessible to more people. This year we are increasing the recognition available to the older runners who are such great role models for all of us.”

Many Garden Spot Village residents participate in the event. Some form relay teams that walk the course. Dozens volunteer at registration tables, water stations, at the finish line and in other capacities. Even more come out to cheer the runners on. Over the years, many participants have commented about the warm welcomes and great support they receive at the Garden Spot Village Marathon.

This year’s race will begin at 8 a.m., and race packs will be available at 6:30 a.m. The 26.2-mile, USA Track & Field (USATF)-certified, Boston Marathon qualifier course starts near Garden Spot Village’s Legacy Garden and winds through the scenic Amish farmlands at the foot of the Welsh Mountain before looping back to the 104-acre campus.

Proceeds from the marathon benefit the Garden Spot Village Benevolent Fund, which helps support residents who need financial assistance.

For more information, or to register for the race, visit [www.gardenspotvillagemarathon.org](http://www.gardenspotvillagemarathon.org).