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5,280 Feet to Fitness

Inaugural 'Grand Blue Mile' Street Run slated for April 20

DES MOINES, IA (February 23, 2010) – Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield and the Drake Relays are taking fitness to the streets – literally, by announcing the establishment of the **Grand Blue Mile**, a premier sports and fitness event blending community wellness and world-class athletic competition.

The event consists of a one-mile street run for both recreational and competitive participants, and will feature a decorated invitational championship field of professional athletes as well.

The inaugural event will be held **Tuesday, April 20**. The course will run east on West Locust Street, beginning near 17th Street and ending at Nollen Plaza.

“For centuries, the mile-run has been recognized as *the* classic race,” said Chris Verlengia, Corporate Communications Consultant for Wellmark. “It’s a great distance – universally achievable, but in a sense, unconquerable, which makes the Grand Blue Mile the perfect event to engage individuals at all stages of fitness and positively impact the health of our state.”

“We’re committed to providing participants and spectators with a one-of-a-kind experience,” said Brian Brown, Drake Relays Director. “It isn’t often you get to share the road with Olympians and World Champions, but on April 20, you’ll have that chance. Whether you’re a casual jogger, beginning runner, wheelchair racer, or marathoner – the Grand Blue Mile provides a unique fitness opportunity for everyone.”

The Grand Blue Mile is sponsored by Asics and Powerade. Entry fees are \$15 for youth ages 10-17, and \$20 for adults. A portion of the proceeds will support Iowa Kidstrong youth fitness initiatives.

Visit www.grandbluemile.com for registration and spectator information, including training and nutrition tips, a community forum, and coaching from three-time Olympians **Suzy Favor-Hamilton**, the winningest track & field athlete in NCAA history, with nine individual titles, and **Steve Scott**, record-holder for most sub-four-minute-miles (136) ever.

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