



**RUNNERS ON YOUR MARKS!**

**FIRST ANNUAL**

**MERRICKVILLE HERITAGE CLASSIC**

**ONLY WEEKS AWAY!**

The final countdown is on for the first annual Merrickville Heritage Classic, slated for Saturday April 30, 2016 featuring 2K, 5K and 10K running events through the historic village.

Beautiful hand-crafted medallions, designed and manufactured in Merrickville by Alloy Foundry Company Limited (the Village Metalsmiths) will be awarded to the top three winners of the 5K and 10K events. In addition, those who complete the 2K, 5K and 10K events will receive a participation medallion also designed by the Village Metalsmith.

The running routes, which begin at the Merrickville Community Centre, have been established and the 5K and 10K routes are certified by Athletics Canada (the 2K route does not require certification). To view the routes visit [www.run-merrickville.ca](http://www.run-merrickville.ca) and click on the **Register Here! Volunteer Here!** button or visit <http://raceroster.com/events/2016/6662/merrickville-heritage-classic>. In the coming weeks, volunteers will visit homes along the running routes to share information on race times and temporary road closures.

All three events are open to all. Participants will be issued bibs with chip timers that will track individual running times from start to finish. Start times are 8 A.M. for the 10K *Jewel of the Rideau Run* and 8:15 A.M. for the 2K *Blockhouse Run* and 5K *Canal Run*.

“The goal of the Merrickville Heritage Classic is to encourage people to get outside and get active through recreational running,” explained race co-director Lori Urquhart. “It’s all about promoting a healthy lifestyle through a fun, safe activity.”

“The three running events provide a nice choice for participants—ranging from the 2K route (which can also be walked) to the 10K,” added race co-director Steve Templeton.” People who don’t do much running or are thinking of doing more running can easily participate as can those who run a lot and like to compete.”

Registering for the Merrickville Heritage Classic is simple, thanks to online registration at [www.run-merrickville.ca](http://www.run-merrickville.ca). While the Early Bird registration ended February 29, the cost of participating as of March 1 is very affordable: \$25 for the 2K, \$40 for the 5K, and \$50 for the 10K. Revenue from race registrations will go directly towards covering the operating costs, however, the possibility exists that the Merrickville Heritage Classic could eventually be used to raise funds for a specific charity or community cause. “The fact that this race is promoting good health for all ages—through physical activity—is a strong enough purpose for now,” added Urquhart. “All of us on the committee believe that a healthier population helps keep health costs down. Everyone benefits from that.”

The cost of registering has been kept to a minimum thanks to the volunteer effort that began early last year when a group of local running enthusiasts joined forces to create Run Merrickville. Since then this volunteer committee, which can also be followed on Facebook, has been working hard to develop and promote the event and divvy up responsibilities. The effort has been supported by Merrickville-Wolford Municipal Council and it has benefited from local donations, including financial assistance and other support from the Rideau Community Health Services (Merrickville Community Health Centre). Currently Run Merrickville is seeking to attract other local sponsors to cover operating costs. “We want to ensure the cost of registering remains affordable from one year to the next,” added Urquhart. “It costs money to organize and host an event like this, but we’re keeping that to a minimum thanks to our volunteers and local support.”

The other members of the Run Merrickville organizing committee are: Dan Black, Maria Ferguson, Chuck MacInnis, Sally MacInnis, Karen Murphy, Patricia Sawarna and Deb Templeton.

Currently, the committee is looking for volunteers to help on race day by assisting with set up, traffic control, cheering stations, route guides and clean up. On the day of the race, police will be assisting with traffic control. There will also be on-site emergency services, including paramedics and members of the Merrickville Volunteer Fire Department. “We’d love to hear from anyone who would be willing to lend a hand on race day,” said volunteer co-ordinator Sally MacInnis. “I would encourage people to visit our website where they can learn more about the Merrickville Heritage Classic, and register as a participant or as a volunteer.”

“We’re really excited about this,” added Templeton. “This is going to grow from one year to the next. It will be good for Merrickville-Wolford. It promotes healthy living and sets up nicely as a springtime attraction for the village.”

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