

## PRESS RELEASE:

# Canadian Film Inspires Global Movement for Equality

March 2, 2020

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On **Wednesday, March 4**, during the week of **International Women's Day** thousands of people across Canada and around the world will lace up their runners to show their support for everyone's **right to run free**. Inspired by award winning documentary film, *The Secret Marathon* which tells the story of the first women in Afghanistan to run a marathon, participants will participate in *The Secret 3K* - an annual run/walk event to celebrate **gender equality** and safe and inclusive spaces.

Film Director and Producer, Kate McKenzie shares, "While filming a documentary in Afghanistan, I was inspired by such brave women and girls who **fought for equality and at times, risked their lives** for the freedom to run outdoors. When I returned to Canada, I was struck by the stories of so many women who told me they didn't feel safe to walk or run at night right here in Canada. *The Secret 3K* was launched to **reclaim safe public spaces** and **champion gender equality** here at home."

This year, *The Secret 3K* has grown and will feature marquee events in **every Canadian province** as well as pop-up Virtual events in smaller centres all across Canada and around the world. "Last year we had participants from **16 different countries**," said running legend, Martin Parnell. Parnell is featured in the film and has continued his work to encourage access to sport as the Virtual Race Director for *The Secret 3K*. "In part because of the film and the book that came out last year, new people are discovering this beautiful story and are motivated to spread this message of hope."

Parnell and McKenzie are joined by national partners including **Running Room** and **Girl Guides of Canada**. "We want *The Secret 3K* to make a difference locally and globally," said McKenzie, "So we have partnered with Girl Guides of Canada locally and internationally we support removing barriers for women to access sport and education through *The Marathon of Afghanistan* as well as the charity, Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan."

"We are excited to be the Official Charity Partner with *The Secret 3K* in 2020," said Jill Zelmanovits, CEO, Girl Guides of Canada. "Gender equality and safe spaces for girls are what we are all about so this partnership is a natural fit. Our members agree too and they are coming out in force to support *Secret 3K* events across the country as volunteers and participants."

*The Secret 3K*, now in its third year, was inspired by McKenzie's documentary film ***The Secret Marathon***, in which she and Parnell traveled to **Afghanistan** to support that country's first female marathoners. The film premiered at several major film festivals this fall and audiences registered to participate in this year's *Secret 3K*. Since its inception, *The Secret 3K* has grown to become an international movement with **16 affiliated events across Canada and 16 countries participating around the world**.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Event hosted in every Canadian province and around the world through virtual participants
- Girl Guides can earn a **special crest** for growing their leadership skills by volunteering with the event or by meeting a fitness goal of participating in the 3 km run/walk themselves.
- 1,330 participants registered for last year's walk/run generating \$15,935 for charity (current numbers here: [LINK](#))
- 17 countries participated last year including US, UK, China, Brazil, Germany, Mexico, Australia, New Zealand, Chile, Portugal, Denmark, Israel, Uganda, and Afghanistan

*"In Afghanistan by hosting a safe race they are working towards making a safe place, we asked ourselves why couldn't we do that here in Canada and help everyone feel safe to run and walk in their community." -Kate McKenzie, Co-Founder and National Race Director, The Secret 3K*

*"In Afghanistan, some of the country's first female marathoners were Girl Guides. So it is only fitting that Girl Guides of Canada should come aboard as the Official Charity Partner of The Secret 3K."*  
*-Martin Parnell, Co-Founder, The Secret 3K*

*"The sport of running is all inclusive, an empowering activity, one engaging the runner or walker physically, emotionally and spiritually. The Secret Marathon builds a sense of community during a time in which our world needs more community... a community of people helping and supporting each other."* -John Stanton, Founder & CEO, The Running Room

## QUICK FACTS

- **Media should arrive at 6:00pm** for interviews with official event **occurring at 6:30pm** followed by photo op and a run
- Official marquee locations: Victoria, Vancouver, Edmonton, Red Deer, Calgary, Regina, Winnipeg, Toronto, Kingston, Ottawa, Montreal, Fredericton, Halifax, Charlottetown, St. John's
- To learn more about the film and see the trailer visit [www.theseecretmarathon.com](http://www.theseecretmarathon.com)
- Registration for the race and more information at <https://theseecretmarathon.com/secret3k>
- Previous Media Coverage - [here](#)
- Promotional Photos - [here](#)
- Key Promotional Image - [here](#)

- 30 -

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### **Social Media Information**

#TheSecret3K

Instagram: [@theseecretmarathon](https://www.instagram.com/theseecretmarathon)

Facebook: [@theseecretmarathon](https://www.facebook.com/theseecretmarathon)

Youtube: [The Secret Marathon](https://www.youtube.com/TheSecretMarathon)

Twitter: [@asecretmarathon](https://twitter.com/asecretmarathon)

**About Girl Guides of Canada**

Girl Guides of Canada—Guides du Canada (GGC) empowers every girl in Guiding to discover herself and be everything she wants to be. In Guiding, girls from 5-17 meet with girls their own age in a safe, inclusive space to explore what matters to them. With programming options ranging from innovative STEM activities to outdoor adventures and discussions on mental health and healthy relationships, girls in Guiding can customize their experience to dive into the topics relevant to them. Girl Guides is where girls take the lead, put their ideas into action and jump into awesome activities – all with the support of engaged Guiders who are committed to positively impacting their lives. Guiding is all about supporting girls as they take on challenges and grab hold of every opportunity that comes their way. For more information visit [GirlGuides.ca](http://GirlGuides.ca) and follow [@girlguidesofcanada](https://www.instagram.com/girlguidesofcanada).