



PRESS RELEASE

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Sports Backers, VCU Health announce partnership for VCU Health Richmond Marathon

Title sponsorship begins with Nov. 16, 2019 event

RICHMOND, VA – Sports Backers announced today a new partnership with VCU Health, making the health system the title sponsor of the VCU Health Richmond Marathon starting with the 2019 event on November 16. The announcement took place at Brown's Island, site of the marathon finish line and CoStar post-race party, and featured representatives from Sports Backers and VCU Health, as well as other local officials.

VCU Health has been affiliated with marathon race weekend since 2016 through its sponsorship of the VCU Health 8k. The continued partnership will help VCU Health and Sports Backers work together toward improving the region through healthy living and celebrating Richmond's vibrant and active community. The VCU Health brand represents the VCU health sciences academic programs, the VCU Massey Cancer Center and the VCU Health System, which includes hospitals, specialized healthcare facilities, and physician services.

"VCU Health is pleased to take on the title sponsorship of the Richmond Marathon and remain a part of the event this year and beyond. We know firsthand the value of prevention through healthy lifestyles and exercise," said Melinda Hancock, VCU Health System's Chief Financial Officer. "VCU Health is here for medical needs and emergencies but we also want to be an integral part of investing in and improving the health of our community."

The Richmond Marathon is consistently recognized as a top fall race, earning the title of 'America's Friendliest Marathon' from *Runner's World* magazine. Both the Boston Athletic Association, organizer of the Boston Marathon, and RaceRaves, a national leader in running event operations and rankings, list Richmond as one of the top qualifying races for the Boston Marathon. The Richmond Marathon regularly attracts participants from all 50 states and dozens of countries to run Richmond and experience a flat, fast course, scenic neighborhoods, enthusiastic crowd support, views of the James River, and first-class organization from registration through race day.

"At Sports Backers, our mission is to inspire active living on a daily basis and create active living opportunities for residents and visitors alike," said Jon Lugbill, Executive Director of Sports Backers. "The Richmond Marathon is a great celebration of our mission and the race festivities show off the best that our region has to offer. We are excited to partner with VCU Health and work together to build active communities and help race participants achieve their goals."

For the past seven years, the event has been known as the Anthem Richmond Marathon, and the successful partnership with Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield comes to an end after the 2018 race on November 10. "We are proud to have sponsored the Richmond Marathon since 2012," said Jeff Ricketts, president, Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield. "We plan to continue our strong support of community events across Virginia and look forward to continuing our work with Sports Backers to make Richmond a leader in healthy and active living."

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Kids Run RVA is the official charity partner of the Richmond Marathon. Kids Run RVA is an initiative of Sports Backers that reaches thousands of young people across the Richmond region and has run clubs in more than 60 schools and neighborhoods, including many underserved communities. Kids Run RVA gives youth the chance to have fun while being physically active in their own communities and gets thousands of kids moving throughout the Richmond area on a daily basis. Kids Run RVA works to break down barriers and provide all kids the opportunity to participate in daily physical activity while establishing healthy habits that are critical to their long-term physical, emotional, and social development.

Registration for the 2018 marathon, half marathon, and 8k is currently still available, and more information on the event can be found at www.richmondmarathon.org.

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About VCU and VCU Health

Virginia Commonwealth University is a major, urban public research university with national and international rankings in sponsored research. Located in downtown Richmond, VCU enrolls more than 31,000 students in 217 degree and certificate programs in the arts, sciences and humanities. Thirty-eight of the programs are unique in Virginia, many of them crossing the disciplines of VCU's 11 schools and three colleges. The VCU Health brand represents the VCU health sciences academic programs, the VCU Massey Cancer Center and the VCU Health System, which comprises VCU Medical Center (the only academic medical center and Level I trauma center in the region), Community Memorial Hospital, Children's Hospital of Richmond at VCU, MCV Physicians and Virginia Premier Health Plan. For more, please visit www.vcu.edu and www.vcuhealth.org.

About Sports Backers

With a key message of Let's Go, RVA, the mission of Sports Backers is to inspire people from all corners of our community to live actively. A non-profit organization, Sports Backers is dedicated to producing nationally recognized quality sporting events and programs that motivate residents and visitors alike to be more active, supporting youth running and fitness programs, and advocating for safe and connected networks of bike and pedestrian infrastructure. Learn more at www.sportsbackers.org.