

“From the plains of Marathon to the hills of Hopkinton”

by Sarah Duckett

For the first time, a new collaboration of various organizations and town committees is working on an initiative called the "Hopkinton Running Festival" which is a collaborative effort of the Hopkinton Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Revitalization Committee, Hopkinton Marathon Committee, Parks and Recreation Commission and Hopkinton Athletic Association. Its purpose?

“To create a unified look and vision for the community for the 2500th anniversary of the Battle of Marathon,” said Chamber Director Tim Kilduff.

Beth Graubart from Hopkinton Drug has spearheaded the idea with a “Hopkinton Running Festival” to be held at the drug store April 17, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. It was her vision to see the downtown area come together and offer something to the townspeople for this historic marathon. She and Ciao Time’s Denise Griben said they were surprised that so few Hopkinton citizens joined in the fun.

“This town is the running mecca that weekend and the town should do something about it and get in the action,” said Marathon Committee Chairwoman Dottie Ferriter-Wallace.

The idea is for downtown businesses to be open and offer something to the public over the weekend. “Passports” with a map of the downtown area will be issued and as visitors go to one of the shops listed, the passport would be stamped. When the passports are all stamped, they would be entered in a drawing for a prize.

There would be signs posted in all the storefronts advertising events.

The first event will be “Step into Africa” to be held at the First Congregational Church which can be seen April 11-18 and is free to the public. The church is “partnering with World Vision to bring an interactive, walk-through exhibit to the MetroWest area. This experience, now touring the U.S., will transport you into the heart of Africa and the life of a child affected by the AIDS crisis. The exhibit combines a stirring audio tour with captivating photography to give you a whole new perspective.”

The Kenyan runners will make their annual trip to Elmwood School.

And, since this is the 2500th anniversary of the Battle of Marathon, a contingent of over 70 Greek runners and their staff will be here for the Marathon. Local housing is needed for them. Contact the *Independent* if you are willing and able to house a runner or two.

Even though he is not downtown, Mike Tobin of the Marathon Restaurant on South Street will be able to host runners and families or other events through this new initiative. A new web site is in the making to keep everyone informed of the planning progress.