Nationwide Children’s Hospital Columbus Marathon & ½ Marathon
Cancelled For 2020 Due to COVID-19 Pandemic
All registered participants to receive full refund

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)– The 2020 Nationwide Children’s Hospital Columbus Marathon & ½ Marathon has been cancelled due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. In taking the action, the event’s Board of Trustees also voted unanimously to provide a full refund of registration fees for 2020 registrants.

In 2019, the Marathon celebrated its 40th anniversary, and was one of the 20th largest marathons in the country. The ½ marathon, the largest in Columbus, enjoyed its 14th anniversary last year. The 2020 race was scheduled for Sunday, October 18.

“No one at the finish line last October could have anticipated that we would cancel the event for this year, but it is absolutely the correct thing to do,” said Board Chairman Dan Leite. “The safety of our athletes, volunteers, first responders, team and the entire community is the top priority for our event. With the ongoing pandemic and based on consultation with our valued partners at Nationwide, NCH and the City of Columbus, it became quite apparent to the Board that the best way to protect everyone’s safety would be to cancel our event for 2020. It was a very difficult decision to make but one we strongly believe is in the best interest of everyone involved.”

“We are grateful for the organizing committee, the volunteers, the community members, the Columbus Marathon board of trustees, and for Nationwide who make the event America’s most meaningful marathon,” said Steve Testa, President, Nationwide Children’s Hospital Foundation. “This is the right decision and while this news might disappoint in the short term, our 128-year-old mission is not taking a break. Kids still get cancer, babies are still born prematurely. We look forward to working with everyone to help children.”

“We know that the board made this difficult decision in the interest of public health, and we support them,” said Nationwide Vice President of Corporate Citizenship Chad Jester. “Nationwide will continue its long-standing support of Nationwide Children’s Hospital and the great work its doctors, nurses and researchers do to help families in central Ohio and all over the world, including our commitment tied to this year’s race.”

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“One of my favorite things to participate in each October is the countdown for the start of the Nationwide Children’s Hospital Columbus Marathon & ½ Marathon. The Columbus Marathon draws thousands of visitors from across the United States and has showcased our great city to the world for more than 40 years,” said Mayor Andrew J. Ginther. “I applaud the event organizers and the leaders of Nationwide Children’s Hospital for putting the safety of participants and the greater Columbus community first.”

Since 2012, the event has raised $10 million for Nationwide Children’s Hospital, the marathon’s benefiting charity. In that time, nearly 200 patients or former patients of the hospital have lined the route as Marathon Patient Champions, cheering on participants and representing and advocating for the many children and families that are cared for at Nationwide Children’s.

“It pains us to not be able to bring our race forward in 2020, but these are no ordinary times,” said Race Director Darris Blackford. “Everyone has faced changes to our ‘normal’ ways of life. When you think about the best health and safety practices needed to help slow the spread of the virus, holding a major running footrace isn’t the responsible thing to do right now.”

Registered athletes will receive specific instructions in coming weeks about how to obtain their refund for the 2020 event. The Board also decided against offering a deferral option of registration fees for a future year’s race.

Since the Marathon’s combined partnership with Nationwide and Nationwide Children’s, registrants have been able to fundraise on behalf of the hospital as Children’s Champions. Hospital supporters will still have a chance to fundraise for the patients and families the hospital cares for and there will be a future announcement about fundraising activities.

About Nationwide
Nationwide, a Fortune 100 company based in Columbus, Ohio, is one of the largest and strongest diversified insurance and financial services organizations in the United States. Nationwide is rated A+ by both A.M. Best and Standard & Poor’s. An industry leader in driving customer-focused innovation, Nationwide provides a full range of insurance and financial services products including auto, business, homeowners, farm and life insurance; public and private sector retirement plans, annuities and mutual funds; excess & surplus, specialty and surety; pet, motorcycle and boat insurance. For more information, visit www.nationwide.com. Follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

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About Nationwide Children’s Hospital
Named to the Top 10 Honor Roll on U.S. News & World Report’s 2020-21 list of “Best Children’s Hospitals,” Nationwide Children’s Hospital is one of America’s largest not-for-profit freestanding pediatric health care systems providing wellness, preventive, diagnostic, treatment and rehabilitative care for infants, children and adolescents, as well as adult patients with congenital disease. Nationwide Children’s has a staff of more than 13,000 providing state-of-the-art pediatric care during more than 1.6 million patient visits annually. As home to the Department of Pediatrics of The Ohio State University College of Medicine, Nationwide Children’s physicians train the next generation of pediatricians and pediatric specialists. The Abigail Wexner Research Institute at Nationwide Children’s Hospital is one of the Top 10 National Institutes of Health-funded freestanding pediatric research facilities. More information is available at NationwideChildrens.org.

About Nationwide Children’s Hospital Columbus Marathon & ½ Marathon
The Nationwide Children’s Hospital Columbus Marathon & ½ Marathon has raised approximately $10 million for Nationwide Children’s Hospital since it became the title beneficiary of the event in 2012. Since its founding in 1980, hundreds of thousands of participants from all 50 states and around the world have competed in the Columbus Marathon. For more information, visit www.columbusmarathon.com.