



## Scotiabank Blue Nose Marathon 2015 Report to the Community



June 30, 2015

## ***Executive Summary***

The 12<sup>th</sup> annual Scotiabank Blue Nose Marathon took place on Victoria Day Weekend, 2015, when 11,588 participants walked, ran or wheeled in seven events through Halifax and Dartmouth.

The Blue Nose Weekend consists of **three key pillars**:

1. **Walking/Running events**, including a Full Marathon, Marathon Team Relay, Half Marathon, 10KM, 5KM and two Youth Runs – 2KM and 4KM
2. **Active Living Expo**, a two-day lifestyle event at the World Trade & Convention Centre, with 80 exhibitor booths and 18,000+ attendees
3. **Scotiabank Charity Challenge**, a two-day fundraising event that attracted a record 81 local charities and more than 1,400 participants raising \$530,000.

In addition, ten local music groups set up along the routes as part of the Blue Nose Boogie program – raising the spirits of runners and the profile of local musicians of every genre. And, they were also cheered on by thousands of local residents, as the participants passed their homes. The following are notable milestones:

## ***Blue Nose Marathon Achievements***

### **Health and Social Milestones**

- Blue Nose is the largest marathon weekend event east of Ottawa, welcoming over **100,000** participants in the first 12 years
- The **Doctors Nova Scotia Youth Run** is Canada’s largest – with 3,700 youth, and thousands more accompanying parents and grandparents. More than 60 school groups participated from all over Nova Scotia. The 2K Youth Run attracted **1,700**; and the 4K had **2,000** registrants. These two distances accommodate the varying ages and fitness levels in the community.
- More than **1,500 volunteers** provide **40,000+** hours of event support
- In 2015, the **Scotiabank Charity Challenge** grew to 81 charities and more than 1,400 individual participants, raising over **\$530,000** in just two days.
- In its fourth year, the CABCO Youth Run **bursary program** removed financial barriers for **84 boys and girls** to experience Blue Nose. Another **58** were provided **free registration** for the 5KM, thanks to the sponsorship of MicMacMall, including a group of Inuit teens from Salluit Quebec, who are wellness role models in their community.
- The **Shoe Mountain and Socks for Soles** projects received 1,000 pairs of gently-used running shoes and 400 pairs of new socks that were distributed to Nova Scotians in need.
- The **youngest registrant** in Blue Nose for 2015 was a month old and the **eldest** was 86 years old – supporting our belief that Blue Nose is “the people’s marathon”



## **Business Milestones**

- The expanded Active Living Expo on two floors at the World Trade and Convention Centre, promoting health and wellness, sold-out (81 booths)
- New sponsors and partnerships welcomed for 2015: MicMacMall, Brooks, SuperStore, PODS, Heritage Gas, Impark and ScotiaSquare
- Halifax Transit offered **free transportation** to volunteers and runners – hundreds of participants used the service, reducing traffic on the roads and congestion.
- The first S.T.E.A.M. report was prepared by Tourism Nova Scotia, to **measure the economic impact** of Blue Nose weekend in the city. It is estimated that Blue Nose Marathon contributes **\$3.4-million to the local economy**; and if the Charity Challenge is added in, that generates a total of nearly **\$4-million annually**.
- Social media activity is growing with over **15,000 likes** and followers on Facebook, Twitter; and thousands of photos posted on Instagram and Flickr.
- Blue Nose was honoured with the **Ambassador Award** by Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia (TIANS), for its role in attracting visitors to Halifax/Dartmouth
- The launch of the new **Heritage Gas Marathon Team Relay** attracted **29 teams**, exceeding our goal by 9. This offered a friendly competition event, team building and fundraising opportunity for businesses, organizations and special interest groups.

The World Trade and Convention Centre (WTCC) and Scotiabank Centre are ‘home base’ to Blue Nose’s three-day program of events. This central location with extensive facilities that are accessible, allows Blue Nose and WTCC staff to provide excellent customer service and efficient access to the Start-Finish line areas, located adjacent to Citadel Hill.

## ***Volunteers***

Many events in Halifax would not take place without the generous support of volunteers. Blue Nose volunteers are particularly dedicated people including friends and families that volunteer together. In 2015, over **1,500 volunteers** dedicated **40,000+ hours** to ensure a positive and safe experience for all participants. Many people have volunteered multiple years – including some since the year Blue Nose started.

### **Accommodation for special needs**

In an effort to be more inclusive of all abilities in the community, Blue Nose customized its recruitment. We asked volunteers to self-identify if they would like tasks that accommodated specific needs, time slots, physical challenges etc.

## ***Community Engagement***

Blue Nose aims to provide a welcoming, inclusive and accessible event for all residents and visitors, whether as participants or route supporters. Every year, requests from various individuals and groups in the community continue to grow. We do our best to accommodate proposals that contribute to the health and well-being of people in our community. The following are highlights of our activities:

- Blue Nose Marathon's first **Icebreaker event** on Sunday, January 25, 2015 encouraged individuals and families to embrace winter fitness and stay active. The event running from 2-4 pm started with a fun run, courtesy of The Running Room. Following the run, the skating event, starring Myles as a skater, attracted **1,000 individuals and families**.
- Now in its 3<sup>rd</sup> year, **Shoe Mountain** expanded its mandate with **Socks for Soles**, inviting people to donate gently-used running shoes and new athletic socks to Nova Scotians in need. Partnering with Souls Harbour Rescue Mission, Salvation Army, Metro Turning Point and local charities that work with homeless people, a total of 1,000 pairs of shoes and 400 pairs of socks were distributed, mostly in Halifax and to 5 points throughout the province.
- **Lost & Found** – many participants shed quality running clothes along the route. Blue Nose collects everything and holds it at the office for 2 weeks – advertising to runners that we have Lost & Found. Approximately 20% of items are picked up; and the **rest is donated to charity groups** that greatly appreciate receiving quality running gear – the clothes stay out of the landfill, and instead are given to people who need them.
- As a '**free to spectators**' admission, Blue Nose provides accessibility to HRM residents
- Blue Nose offers **free** admission to **Active Living Expo** and Speaker/Demo events, attracting around **18,000 visitors**.
- **15 community organizations** staffed on-course water stations, offering interactivity with the community and a chance for organizations to raise their profile in a volunteer setting.
- A public invitation to **local entertainers** (both professional and amateur) provided on-course live entertainment for the runners, and profile for up-and-coming musicians
- Local **community 'cheer' stations** including themes and costumes, provided additional excitement and encouragement to all participants
- The **running community** was once again invited to send in their slogans for the coveted spot on the Youth and Adult t-shirts. Over 220 entries were received. The winning slogan "You Nose you can" was very popular.
- **Outreach** to local churches, synagogues, mosques and other faith organizations – informing them of any impact of runners in their area, and an invitation to cheer on the runners.
- Blue Nose welcomed **2 runners from Kenya** (thanks to the sponsorship of local businessman Ethan Michaels). In addition to participating in running events, the world-class runners also visited local schools where they inspired young Nova Scotians to become and stay active.
- **International students** from Saint Mary's and Dalhousie offered key volunteer resources during the weekend, reflecting the growing ethnic diversity in HRM.
- A team of enthusiasts stationed on the **HMCS Fredericton** hosted their own Blue Nose Marathon event **in Scotland**, inviting members of other NATO ships to join them. In all 80 people participated, and they raised money for a local charity. A photo of Myles saluting the crew with a sign HMCSGive'r attracted 7,000 views
- The **Team Myles program** invited 15 local enthusiasts to become Blue Nose ambassadors, undergoing a five-month training program for the 5KM or 10KM events. Often new to running or walking, Team Myles ambassadors were introduced to active healthy lifestyle coaching, fitness, yoga and nutrition. Many blogged about their journey, inspiring other self-described 'non-runners' to participate.



- **T-shirts** left over from 2014 were sent to hundreds of people in Kenya and Guatemala
- The **second inter-provincial collaboration** between Marathon by the Sea (NB), Blue Nose and PEI Marathon, offering a customized medal for those who register for all three events.



- More than **\$530,000 raised** and donated to **81 local charities** through the Scotiabank Charity Challenge. Thanks to Scotiabank's extensive support, 100 per cent of money raised goes to the charity.

## ***Inclusivity update – how we aim to be there for everyone***

- We consider all participants 'heroes' for participating – whether they are the first across the Finish lines or the last ones.
- We celebrate those who have transformed their lives or overcome obstacles by participating in Blue Nose. We do this through our storytelling, media stories and social media – and they inspire others.
- Most of our events and activities are accessible for people with physical limitations – this includes people on crutches, those with reduced walking/running capacities and recreational wheelchair athletes
- We have generous finish time closures and keep volunteers on site to cheer as many runners as possible at the end.
- We added new age walking/running categories of 80+ in response to a request from a regular runner in the community
- In order to maintain the spirit of Blue Nose as the People's Marathon, we do not offer cash prizes to elite/competitive runners. A small gift goes to the top three in each age category.
- Every runner who finishes gets the same medal – whether a world-class competitor or a first-time runner
- We allow strollers in the Youth Run, to meet the demand for young parents who wish to include their infants
- We've enhanced our Volunteer recruitment form to encourage people of all abilities to sign up for Blue Nose. We accommodate a wide-range of physical and intellectual capabilities
- We updated our employment recruitment packages to state publicly that we are an inclusive organization, welcoming people of all ages, fitness levels and abilities
- In 2015 we enhanced our Board of Directors by reaching out to the community and inviting people who better represent the Blue Nose community



## ***Tourism and Economic Impact***

Over the past 12 years, Blue Nose weekend has attracted a growing number of visitors to Halifax and Dartmouth – some visit for the day, others stay overnight for one or two nights. This event on Victoria Day weekend is considered a real boon to city services during a 'shoulder' tourism season.

Since 2004, Blue Nose has provided a focal point on the weekend for walkers, runners, volunteers and sponsors; and it has become a major attraction for individuals and families. Blue Nose has grown from 3,400 to nearly 12,000 in 2015 – and numerous activities have been added to the weekend slate of events.

While precise attendance figures along the route are not available, it is clear that residents of Halifax and Dartmouth feel the excitement and embrace the event. Thousands of supporters cheered at the Start line; and along the route thousands more waved, held up fun signs, offered water, entertained with music, chanted well wishes and generally supported participants.

### **Locals Visitors**

According to 2015 registration data, almost half of the attendees are from Halifax and Dartmouth, while the other half are from outside of HRM, suggesting high levels of one to two-day visits to the city centre to share in the excitement of Blue Nose Weekend.

Visitation levels tracked high again this year. Downtown hotels report high occupancy, including sold out status at our host hotels Delta Halifax and Delta Barrington. Also, the Hampton Inn by report of numerous of guests who were participating in Blue Nose. In addition, restaurants, shops and attractions served thousands of residents and visitors attending Blue Nose.

### **Winner – Ambassador Tourism Award**

In late 2014, Blue Nose Marathon won the special Ambassador Award through Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia, for providing a quality event on an on-going basis that continuously attracts visitors to the province.

### **Quote from Andrew Chak – Columnist, Blogger and Winner of the Recharge with Milk contest, on winning a trip to Blue Nose Marathon in 2015**

*“But the most special element of the Blue Nose Marathon is by far, the locals. East coasters are some of the friendliest, most welcoming people I’ve ever come across. I cherished the many hugs and high-fives from the #RunAtCan community where we simply continued the runner love we had shared previously via Twitter and Instagram posts.”*



### **S.T.E.A.M Report (Sport Tourism Economic Assessment Model)**

As a non-profit sporting organization, Blue Nose was interested to learn about the economic impact of its activities in the city – however, the cost of a study is prohibitive. Tourism Nova Scotia developed a report known as the STEAM report; and in 2015, Blue Nose was invited to participate. By providing the requested information, we were able to learn the following information: The combined total of visitor, capital and operational spending as a result of hosting the 2015 Scotiabank Bluenose Marathon are estimated to total \$1.5-million. These expenditures are expected to generate a total of **\$3.4-million of economic activity in the province**, of which \$2.3-million will be in Halifax.

According to the S.T.E.A.M Report, “The 2015 Scotiabank Bluenose Marathon is estimated to provide a total of 16.1 jobs for Halifax and an additional 5.6 jobs for the remainder of the province. These jobs will create a total of \$1.1-million in wages and salaries for Nova Scotia as a whole. The net increase in economic activity in the province as a result of the initial expenditures of the event is \$1.7-million.”

## ***Key facts about Blue Nose***

An event that attracts nearly 12,000 participants yields some valuable data about who participates. The following includes some highlights of the demographic and qualitative information about the participants’ experience:

### **All Adults**

- 66% are female and 34% male
- 73% are between 21-50 years old
- 71% have household incomes \$50k+
- 63% have post-secondary education
- 69% are from HRM
- 92% rated their experience excellent or very good
- 96% expectations met or exceeded

### **Media Awareness and Marketing**

Although Blue Nose is a well-established brand, it is part of a much larger pool of sporting events in the province. Every year, Blue Nose ensures its profile is reinforced in the marketplace through a variety of marketing and communications activities. HRM benefits greatly from the media exposure that is part of Blue Nose’s extensive activities. The following provide examples of advertising and marketing.

### **Advertising**

- Print ads: in the Chronicle Herald; iRun, OptiMYz, The Coast and Running Room magazines
- Outdoor billboard campaigns in Halifax (CBS Outdoor)
- Regional TV advertising (CBC)
- Extensive radio ad and promo campaigns (C100, Bounce, CBC Radio)

### **On Line and Electronic Platforms**

- All running events **webcast on CBC**
- Over **600,000 visits** to the Blue Nose website
- An engaging electronic newsletter reached **30,000 subscribers** with 15 newsletters in six months, maintaining high levels of communication and information sharing with participants and the public at large.
- Over **9,180 Facebook likes** and **518,000 impressions** during Blue Nose 2015 season. The launch of the 2015 medal reached 17,000+ and a video clip of Myles: 19,000.
- More than **5,300 Twitter followers** and **700,000 impressions** between Jan. and May, 2015.
- Social media partnering with 20+ sponsors, reaching over **one-million** people nationally

## Marketing

- Blue Nose distributed flyers and posters to 100+ HRM elementary schools, business, health clubs and sporting facilities.
- Canada Post direct mail campaign targeted key race route areas, keeping citizens, businesses, residents and places of worship updated on traffic changes, routing impacts and general event info.
- Liaison with HRM Call Centre staff provided front line event information allowing call takers to respond effectively to inquiries.
- Short videos received thousands of views on Facebook and Twitter
- Numerous contests and cross-promotions with media sponsors, community groups and other partners – very successful response to all contests.
- Appearances by Myles the Mascot at many public events, raised awareness of Blue Nose in all areas of the community.



## Environmental Sustainability

**Encourage active transport:** **Clean Nova Scotia** set up a "Bicycle Valet" at the Grand Parade on event weekend, providing secure bicycle parking for participants, volunteers and audiences. Usage of this service has grown every year.

**Promote carpooling and shuttles:** **Halifax Transit** offered free transportation to event hundreds of volunteers on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Registered runners on Saturday and Sunday only had to show their bib to get free transportation. In addition, a ferry started earlier on Sunday to accommodate both volunteers and participants.

**Impark** – offering the largest number of parking lots in downtown Halifax offered \$2/day parking over Blue Nose weekend, to encourage car-pooling.

**Reduce idling/Drive Smart:** **Emera** provided an electric hybrid car for both lead/lag cars during the Youth Run and 5 km Run on Saturday; and for the Full Marathon on Sunday. **Clean Nova Scotia provided** personnel with 3 hybrid vehicles during event weekend.



**PODS** supplied mobile storage units to house all the goods and services required for 15 water stations throughout the routes in Halifax and Dartmouth.

**Reduce waste:** Additional four-stream waste receptacles were added to the Halifax Metro Centre, Brunswick Street Finish Line and World Trade & Convention Centre. Event signage is designed to be reused or repurposed.



**Eliminate bottled water:** Four years ago, **Halifax Water Commission** assisted us with reducing our 100% reliance on bottled water at water stations. We now use tap water at all but one water station. This represents approximately **100,000 cups of water**, during the event weekend.

**Recruit sustainability volunteers:** Volunteers assisted with the following tasks: communications; auditors; waste education and bike valet.

**Promote sustainability action plan, stories and tips:** Using Facebook, Twitter and our website, and as well as the services of our Public Affairs team we communicated our 2015 Sustainability Action Plan.

**Donations:** Purolator delivered remaining food, post event, to Feed Nova Scotia; Shoe Mountain accepted donations of "gently used running shoes" that were distributed within Nova Scotia and abroad with the assistance of Value Village and other sponsors.

### ***Charity and Social Recap***

- Scotiabank Charity Challenge engaged a record **81 local charities** raising over **\$530,000** with the help of **1,400+ registered participants**, including 69 Scotiabank employees.
- Charity Challenge was supported with Chronicle Herald ads and 'in-branch' collateral materials at all Scotiabank branches in Atlantic Canada (135)
- A total of 142 bursaries for complimentary registration were provided to children and adults facing financial obstacles, thanks to the support of CABCO and MicMacMall
- More than **1,000** pairs of running shoes and 400 pairs of socks were donated during the Blue Nose weekend, helping Nova Scotians in need – including approximately 400 children.
- All clothing left on the Blue Nose route was held as 'lost and found' for two weeks. Instead of sending the unclaimed clothing to a landfill site, everything was donated to charity. More than **200 pieces** of quality running gear were distributed to people in need.

#### ***Contact:***

Gina Brown

Executive Director, Scotiabank Blue Nose Marathon

[gina@bluenosemarathon.com](mailto:gina@bluenosemarathon.com)

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