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2018 Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile To Host 2018 RRCA National Championships

Elite Field Includes Numerous RRCA Roads Scholars and RunPro Campers Who Will Compete for a Special \$2,400 Prize Purse

March 14, 2018, Washington, DC: The 46th Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile, to be held on April 8, will serve as the 2018 National 10-mile Championships for the Road Runners Club of America (RRCA), building upon a long tradition of cooperation and mutual support between the race and America's oldest and largest association of running organizations. This year's RRCA Convention, to be held April 5-7 in Arlington, VA, will celebrate the 60th anniversary of the organization, while the 2018 Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile will proudly include several RRCA Roads Scholars and RunPro Campers in its invited field.

"The Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile and the RRCA practically grew up together, although at 46, we are a few years younger," said Credit Union Cherry Blossom Event Director Phil Stewart. "We are pleased to be able to help the RRCA celebrate this very special moment in its history. Both the RRCA and Cherry Blossom, Inc. are strong believers in local, non-profit owned and managed running events that celebrate the grassroots running community."

"One of the first acts of business for the RRCA in 1958 was to award events the championship status, making the RRCA Championship Event Series the oldest grassroots-organized race series in the U.S.," explained Jean Knaack, RRCA executive director. "We are thrilled to be working with such a strong race partner in the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile to help the RRCA carry on its 60-year tradition of awarding championship status to outstanding races that provide a high level of competition."

Since 1996, the RRCA has awarded 118 grants totaling \$565,000 through its Roads Scholar program to assist American post-collegiate road runners who show great promise to develop into national and world class road running athletes. Over the past 20 years, the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Run has contributed over \$200,000 to the Roads Scholar grant program as the program's largest single contributor.

To date, the following RRCA Roads Scholar grant recipients have committed to race in the 2018 Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile: **Martin Hehir**, who was awarded a Roads Scholar grant in 2016 and placed third in the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile that same year; **Emma Bates**, **Johnny**

Crain, Tyler Jermann and **Matt McClintock**, all 2017 grant recipients; **Katy Moen**, who was awarded a grant in 2015; and 2011 Roads Scholar **Tyler McCandless**. In addition, **Deena Kastor**, the 2004 Olympic Marathon Bronze Medalist and 1996 Roads Scholar grant recipient, will attend this year's RRCA Convention and Credit Union Cherry Blossom Health & Fitness Expo, though she will not be running the race.

RunPro is another RRCA-funded program that Credit Union Cherry Blossom organizers are pleased to support. Event Director Phil Stewart and Elite Athlete Coordinator Bill Orr are regular faculty members at the RunPro Camp weekend held in July of each year. Intended to assist newly-graduated, post-collegiate runners seeking to make the transition to professional running, the annual RunPro Camp, first held in 2011, connects aspiring professional runners with the resources necessary to pursue a professional running career. 2016 RunPro Camper **Abbabiya Simbassa** has committed to race in the 2018 Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile, as has 2014 RunPro Camper **Susanna Sullivan**. Two Roads Scholar grant recipients mentioned above - Johnny Crain and Kay Moen - are also RunPro Camp alumni (2015).

In addition to the \$100,500 in prize money and bonuses being offered by Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile organizers, the RRCA has contributed \$2,400 to be awarded to the first male and female Roads Scholars or RunPro Camp attendees at this year's RRCA National 10-mile Championships. Payment will be split equally between the first eligible man and woman.

The 2018 Credit Union Cherry Blossom Run will mark the 17th year of title sponsorship by Credit Union Miracle Day. Since 2002, over \$8 million has been raised for the Children's Miracle Network Hospitals.

About the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile

The Credit Union Cherry Blossom, organized by Cherry Blossom, Inc., a 501c(3) chapter of the Road Runners Club of America, is known as "The Runner's Rite of Spring®" in the Nation's Capital. The staging area for the event is on the Washington Monument Grounds and the course passes in sight of all of the major Washington, DC Memorials. The event serves as a fundraiser for the Children's Miracle Network Hospitals, a consortium of 170 premier children's hospitals across North America. About one-third of the funds raised support Washington, DC's own Children's National ("Children's Hospital"). The event also funds two \$5,000 Road Runners Club of America "Roads Scholar" grants designed to support up-and-coming U.S. distance running talent.

The event is a proud member of the **PRRO Circuit** (PRRO.org), a series of non-marathon prize money road races in Tampa, FL; Washington, DC; Spokane, WA; Utica, NY; and Pittsburgh, PA, with the 2018 PRRO Championships to be hosted by the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile on April 8. The circuit is committed to a drug-free sport and funds Clearidium to conduct drug testing at all circuit events in compliance with the standards of international and U.S. drug testing authorities.

In addition to being sanctioned by **USA Track & Field** and the **Road Runners Club of America**, the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Run has earned Gold Level Inspire Certification from the **Council for**

Responsible Sport in recognition of its legacy of commitment to sustainability and thoughtful resource management. To learn more, visit www.CherryBlossom.org.

Credit Union Miracle Day, Inc., a consortium of credit unions and credit union suppliers in partnership with CUNA Mutual Group and PSCU, is the title sponsor of the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile Run, 5K Run-Walk and Kids' Run. Hood Cottage Cheese is the presenting sponsor of the 5K Run-Walk. Supporting sponsors include E-Trade, Garmin, Gatorade, GEICO, Gold's Gym, Mamma Lucia, MedStar Sports Medicine, Navy Federal Credit Union, Old Ox Brewery, Potomac River Running, Suburban Solutions, and Under Armour.

About America's Credit Unions:

Credit unions provide consumers choices for financial services such as checking accounts, investments and loans of all kinds including mortgages. Funds are federally insured, but unlike banks, there are no stockholders at credit unions. Earnings are returned to member-owners in the form of lower loan rates, higher savings rates, low or no-fee products and services. The credit union philosophy of placing members' needs first is why more than 113 million Americans do their banking at one of America's 5,800 credit unions. Credit unions are for everyone - no matter where you live, there is a credit union to meet your needs.

About the Road Runners Club of America:

The Road Runners Club of America (RRCA) is the oldest and largest national association of running organizations and runners dedicated to growing the sport since 1958. The RRCA champions the development of community-based running clubs and events that serve runners of all ages and abilities in pursuit of health and competition. The RRCA's vision is to see organized and active running clubs and events established in every community in the U.S. To learn more, visit: www.RRCA.org

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