



Wednesday May 24th, 2017

TO: Superior 25KM and 50KM Trail Race Volunteers

Dear Friends,

So many of you have been so wrong. I am sorry, but that is what popped into my head when I finally got a chance to go out for my therapy last night, a quiet run on the streets and trails of my home town. Maybe not all of you, but many of you have been wrong. I know it may seem unusual for me to start my thank you letter to our cherished friends and volunteers this way, but there was nothing usual about this years Superior Trail Race, nothing usual about losing a member of our trail family and nothing usual about what it has stirred up in me - as I am sure it has stirred up a lot in you as well. I have been telling you all for a long time that these events can't happen without you, that you *are* the Superior Trail Race and that you *are* Rocksteady Running - I have gotten skeptical looks, I have had people tell me that it just is not true, that they are not necessarily needed, I have seen volunteers show up at an aid station or at the finish line wondering "why are there so many of us - there is not going to be anything for me to do, I don't feel helpful"... and that my friends, is where many have been so wrong. Never has it been so crystal clear to me, in the face of this terrible tragedy we are starkly reminded that we **NEED** you, that your fellow runners **NEED** you, each and every single one of you. We need you when things are going well and we need you even more when things are not. One of my favorite things in the world is standing on that finish line of the races I direct, greeting each and every runner as they finish - but on Saturday only one thing required my attention, and rightfully so - and you, the people that make the Superior Trail Race what it is, those that *are* Rocksteady Running, you stepped up and you finished up the race with skill and dignity, and so really, what further proof do you need - we cannot do this without you nor would we ever want to. I thank each and everyone of you who continue to take the care, the ownership and the responsibility that make these events so special - they are much more than just races.

Let us never forget that we do this for fun but we also do this for physical, mental and spiritual health and we do it for each other and that it is why hurts so bad when we lose someone that is a part our community, because we have all gained so much through this community. Even though we may not have all met, we all know each other, and we all grieve together in the face of this tragedy...

"During this past Saturday's Superior Trail Race, we lost a member of our trail running community. Jon Mathson, 41, of Eagan, Minnesota, collapsed on the trail between Moose Mountain and Mystery Mountain while running the 25KM race. The official cause of death has not yet been determined. Jon was a three-time finisher of the Superior 25KM race, loved trail running and mountain biking with friends, and was an avid birder. Jon taught Earth Science and Chemistry at Eagan High School and was revered by his students and co-workers alike. Jon is survived by his wife, Becky, and two-year-old son, Dylan. Please join with us in holding Jon's wife and son in your thoughts and prayers in the days and weeks to come."

Thank you all for your ongoing friendship and support of Cheri and I, of one and other, of the Superior Trail Races and Rocksteady Running. As always, if you need anything, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

John Storkamp
Race Director
Superior Trail Race