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## 250 DPSCD STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN 2024 DETROIT FREE PRESS KIDS MARATHON PRESENTED BY PRIORITY HEALTH

*Student runners will receive brand new running shoes at five DPSCD schools Oct. 7, as well as free lunch and transportation to the special event during race weekend*

**DETROIT, Mich. (October 2, 2024)** – Approximately 250 Detroit Public Schools Community District (DPSCD) students are going the distance – completing Michigan’s largest road race in their own way thanks to a new partnership among the DPSCD Foundation, the philanthropic arm of the district; the Detroit Free Press Marathon; and Priority Health.

The students, ages 6-13, from five DPSCD Schools, are participating in the 2024 Detroit Free Press Kids Marathon Presented by Priority Health on Saturday, Oct. 19 as part of a pilot program. But first, they’ll receive brand new running shoes. Running Lab, a Brighton-based retailer and official merchandise partner of the Detroit Free Press Marathon, measured and individually fitted each student for their shoes.

The running shoes will be delivered to students at the following schools Monday, Oct. 7:

- Davison Elementary-Middle School
- Detroit International Academy
- Golightly Education Center
- John R. King Academic and Performing Arts Academy
- Mackenzie Elementary-Middle School

*Members of the media are invited to Mackenzie Elementary-Middle School (10147 West Chicago Street, Detroit) at 2 p.m. for shoe delivery day to capture the excitement and talk with students, partners, and school officials.*

### **How the Detroit Free Press Kids Marathon Works**

Each student participant has until Oct. 18 to complete the first 25.2 miles of the race on their own, logging their progress in gym class, as part of sports programs, and at home. On Oct. 19, they will walk or run the last marathon mile near the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy and receive medals, t-shirts, and official times.

The program was created by Detroit Free Press Marathon Vice President and Race Director Aaron Velthoven to engage the local community, teach healthy habits and introduce Detroit-area kids to the sport of long-distance running. It’s also designed to encourage students to set goals and achieve them. Organizers plan to expand the Kids Marathon program to 500 students in 2025 and add more schools.

“It has been very gratifying to see how excited the kids are to be part of our race – and to be getting new shoes,” Velthoven said. “We’re really appreciative of all the partners who helped make it happen, and can’t wait to see it all come together on Oct. 19 on the Detroit Riverfront.”

Kerrie Mitchell, president and CEO of the DPSCD Foundation, said: “At the heart of our mission is a commitment to ensuring every student has the tools they need to succeed – both inside and outside the classroom. Physical health plays a significant role in academic success. That’s why Detroit Public Schools Community District Foundation is thrilled to collaborate with the Detroit Free Press Marathon and Priority Health, enabling our students to participate in the marathon free of charge, removing barriers to access and encouraging them to stay active while building confidence and perseverance.”

“Partnerships like this offer resources, reduce barriers and inspire the next generation to develop healthy habits at an early age, which has the power to create lasting health outcomes,” added Praveen Thadani, president/CEO of Priority Health. “Providing running shoes for students and the opportunity for them to participate in the Detroit Free Press Kids Marathon are great ways to establish healthy patterns that can last a lifetime.”

On Kids Marathon race day Oct. 19, sponsors will provide transportation for the students from their school to the marathon, and back to school. The restaurant sweetgreen will serve each student a healthy lunch after the race. Additional sponsors include Meijer and Bedrock.

For the first time in its history, the Detroit Free Press Marathon has sold out of all of its Sunday, Oct. 20, races, including the Marathon, the International Half-Marathon, Motor City Half-Marathon and Marathon Relay. There are still openings for Saturday, Oct. 19, races including the 5K, 1-Mile, the Meijer Little Detroit Dash, and the Kids Marathon.

More information, including a registration link, can be found at [freeparathon.com/kids-marathon](https://freeparathon.com/kids-marathon).

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## **About the Detroit Free Press Marathon**

The Detroit Free Press Marathon, presented by MSUFCU, is Michigan’s largest road race, North America’s largest international road race, and a beloved tradition among runners across the world. Featuring a unique cross-border course between the United States and Canada, the event showcases the spirit of Detroit and its vibrant communities. Detroit’s race weekend will be held October 18-20, 2024. Races include the Marathon, International Half-Marathon, Motor City Half-Marathon, Marathon Relay, 5k, 1-Mile, Kids Marathon Presented by Priority Health and Meijer Little Detroit Dash.

## **About DPSCD Foundation**

Launched in 2003, the Detroit Public Schools Community District Foundation is Michigan’s largest public school foundation, investing in Detroit’s students, families, and educators. An independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, we provide resources, scholarships, and programs to prepare students for college, careers, and success in life. Since its inception, the

DPSCD Foundation has raised more than \$30 million to create and enhance educational opportunities for DPSCD. Learn more at [dpsfdn.org](https://dpsfdn.org) or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

### **About Priority Health**

With over 30 years in business, Priority Health is the second largest health plan in Michigan, offering an extensive portfolio of health benefits options for [employer groups](#) and [individuals](#), including [Medicare](#) and [Medicaid](#) plans. Serving more than 1.3 million members each year and offering a broad network of primary care physicians in Michigan, Priority Health continues to be recognized as a leader for quality, customer service, transparency and product innovation. Learn more about affordable, quality health coverage options from [Priority Health](#).