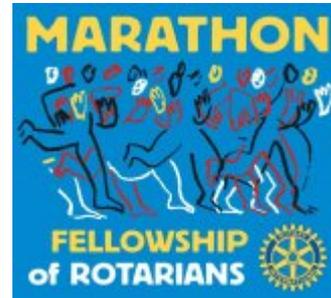


Rotarian Marathon Championship in Rome on 23rd March 2014



On 23 March the annual Rotary Championships in Marathon running were held this year in Rome. The IMFR (International Marathon Fellowship of Rotarians) welcomed to this event about 150 Rotarians and members from many countries (Germany, France, Austria, Italy, Australia, Norway,) to spend an eventful weekend together.

In addition to the marathon itself, Rome a comprehensive program was offered to all participants. In a historic city tour, the group experienced first-hand the enormous Colosseum and the extensive excavations of ancient Rome. In the evening the group expected an Italian pasta party with several courses and matching wines. Many did not want to think of the run the next morning and let enjoy the beautiful evening in a nearby bar.

On the day of the marathon around 25,000 starters had to wait defenceless in quite cold weather in the pouring rain. Many umbrellas or raincoats were clutching until shortly before the start. Then the runners departed for 42.195 km throughout the city centre of Rome. Passing many historic buildings, the Vatican and a loudly cheering crowd the runners headed towards the finish line. Heavy rain falls made the cobblestones sometimes very slippery and the profile of the race was demanding for most of the runners. Fortunately, no major injuries, and (almost) all Rotary runners completed the full distance.

We met for a fantastic celebration dinner in a trendy restaurant in the historic centre of Rome. This dinner was perfectly organized by our friend Mario Morelli (RC Roma Centenario) and we had the pleasure to host the local District Governor Pier Giorgio Poddighe (D2080), who has strongly supported the Rotary event. Many Rotarians and Rotaracters who had actively helped in organizing the event attended the dinner.

President Georges Chasseuil from France was pleased with the excellent times of the Rotary Group. Cindy Häfner (3h55) and Max Lücker (3h29) and were the fastest woman and man.

This unforgeable festive moment was an opportunity to handover the presidency to Ralf Ludwig (Germany), who will lead the IMFR in the next two years. Kester Baines from Australia was elected as Vice-President. Treasurer Joachim Bekedorf (Germany) and secretary Hugues Pflieger (France) were confirmed in their offices.

With the help of this sport event the District 2080 had collected donations about 55,000 EUR for the Polio Plus Initiative of Rotary International.

2015 will be the next International Rotarian Marathon Championship either in Paris in April

or in Budapest in October. The decision about the destination will be made in late April and will be announced in due time. Interested parties are requested for more information at President Ludewig (rotary@mode-ludewig.de) or Treasurer Bekedorf (bekedorf@extra-goe.de) to report . Of course you will also find all the information promptly to the homepage of the Fellowship under www.rotarianrun.org or on Facebook [www.fb.com / IMFR RotarianRun](http://www.fb.com/IMFRRotarianRun) . Here you will also find images from the current run and the runs of previous years.

Of course, the marathon Fellowship will be represented at the Rotary Convention as last year with a booth, Georges, Lutz, and of course Keith and Kester will attend it. The members of this active Rotarian community will be glad to meet as many Rotarians as possible in Sydney. President Ludewig explicitly points out that in addition to marathon runners the IMFR will be also open for all runners of shorter distances (eg, half-marathon and 10 - km run). They all will be welcomed in the Fellowship. Especially families and young people are welcomed guests to these international events.