



**Fort Wayne, Indiana • September 26-27, 2008**

Fort-4-Fitness Festival  
P.O. Box 9007  
Fort Wayne, IN 46899-9007  
(260) 760-3371

## More Than 6,000 People Make Inaugural Fort-4-Fitness Festival A Huge Success *2009 Race Field Expanded To 5,000!*

**For Release: October 1, 2008**

**Contact: Brad Kimmel, Executive Director (260) 760-3371**

Timothy Kenesey, Chairman  
Bradley Kimmel, Executive Director  
David Craker, Race Director

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(Fort Wayne, IN) – More than 6,200 runners, walkers, spectators and festival attendees gathered downtown to help make the inaugural Fort-4-Fitness festival weekend a smashing success. Due to the overwhelmingly positive response in our first year, the Executive Committee of the Fort-4-Fitness board has decided to increase the cap for the 2nd Annual Fort-4-Fitness races on September 26, 2009 to 5000 participants.

Each of the four events that made up the Fort-4-Fitness weekend on September 26-27, 2008 was well-attended. With comments like "We've been waiting for something like this to take place in Fort Wayne for a long time!" and "Everything was well-organized" to "What a wonderful event!", the mission of the Fort-4-Fitness, which is a commitment to promoting healthy lifestyles in Northeast Indiana, was realized. Many thanks to our Diamond sponsor, Parkview Health, for leading the way in making Fort-4-Fitness a reality.

"We knew that Fort Wayne and Northeast Indiana would support an event like Fort-4-Fitness and we were not disappointed," said Fort-4-Fitness Chairman Tim Kenesey. "From the thousands at the Health Fair on Friday afternoon, to 3,000 registered participants in the sold-out Half and 4 Mile races on Saturday morning, all the way through the terrific Healthy Food Expo, we accomplished our goals of (i) encouraging healthier living in the community; (ii) showcasing the downtown, parks, trails and neighborhoods of scenic Fort Wayne; and (iii) highlighting Northeast Indiana's healthy lifestyle, with the region's best Healthcare Providers, most progressive restaurants and energized citizens. And next year's 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Fort-4-Fitness will do the same – only bigger!"

Fort Wayne Mayor Tom Henry expressed his appreciation. "It was wonderful to see Fort Wayne and Northeast Indiana really come together to support healthy living and to showcase our beautiful city, wonderful healthcare and great restaurants," said Henry. "I thank the Fort-4-Fitness organizers and volunteers, the exhibitors at the Health Fair and Healthy Food Expo, the Fort Wayne police, EMS and city employees, and all of the participants who made this inaugural event so successful. We're already looking forward to Fort-4-Fitness 2009!"

The weekend got off to a rousing start as an estimated 3,000 people came to visit 40 health care and fitness exhibitors at the Health Fair held at the Allen County Public Library and picked up their race packets to get information about the next day's events.



On Saturday the weather was beautiful as both Half Marathon and 4 Mile Run/Walk participants broke into stride at the sound of the starter's horn at 7:30 am. Bobbing heads could be seen all the way down Main Street in downtown as participants christened the largest race in Fort Wayne's history. 3,000 people registered for the sold out event and 2,623 runners and walkers completed the two races. "I've never seen such beautiful parts of Fort Wayne, and I've lived in town for years," exclaimed one runner.

23 states were represented in the races, with more than 90% of participants from Indiana. Nearly 67% of the registered runners were from Fort Wayne and Northeast Indiana communities. "It was amazing watching all of the runners cross the finish line... from the first finisher to the last," said Race Director Dave Craker. "It was an inspiration to see all of the emotion that came out of the finishers who never dreamed they could do this. Every person who participated should be extremely proud of their accomplishment."

22 runners ran the race as part of the American Cancer Society's Charity Runner program, honoring someone who had been touched by Cancer in some way. Together, those 22 runners raised nearly \$6,000 to help fight this disease. "The Charity Runner program helps all of us fight back against a disease that takes too much from too many," said Kathie Fleck, Fort-4-Fitness Board Member and Area Executive Director for the American Cancer Society. "By running or walking in this inaugural event, people not only achieved long-time personal goals, they also raised funds to make sure no one has to face cancer alone."

Many local restaurants set up small tents on Main Street and offered healthy food and beverages to both runners and attendees as a part of the Healthy Food Expo on Saturday. From 9:30 am to 1 pm people sampled healthy cuisine and drinks while watching participants finish the course, or listened to music played in Freimann Square.

It was a perfect weekend and a statement to Northeast Indiana's commitment to developing and maintaining healthy lifestyles.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Fort-4-Fitness Festival is scheduled for September 25-26, 2009. Early registration will open online at [www.fort-4-fitness.org](http://www.fort-4-fitness.org) on October 26, 2008 – eleven months prior to race day. Even with the increased cap for the 2009 Fort-4-Fitness races at 5000 participants, both races are expected to sell out again, **so interested participants are strongly encouraged to register early to ensure a spot in the races.** Log on to [www.fort-4-fitness.org](http://www.fort-4-fitness.org) for more details.

Fort-4-Fitness, Inc. is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization, which supports the Governor's fitness initiative for the state of Indiana.

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