

THE GARDNER NEWS

Your Locally Owned Community Newspaper for Gardner, Ashburnham, Hubbardston, Phillipston, Templeton, Westminster

Home

Page One

Local Daily News

Local Sports

Editorial

COMPLIMENTARY
ACCESS

Opinion Survey

CLASSIFIEDS

Legal Notices

Community

Community
Announcements

Community
Events Calendars

Community
Photos

Community
Recipes

Local History

Obituaries

PHOTOS

Supplements

Animal
Enthusiasts

For Your Health

AP NEWS

home : local daily news : news

Share

5/10/2018 8:21:00 AM

Switzer highlights HOPE's upcoming fundraiser

Pioneer in women's running hopes to lend inspiration

Andrew Mansfield
Reporter

Gardner — The annual spring fundraiser for the nonprofit House of Peace & Education will showcase the power of self-confidence and persistence with its trailblazing keynote speaker.

The Gardner-based organization, known as HOPE, runs afterschool programs and summer camp for youth as well as a job readiness program that primarily serves women but also some men.

Kathrine **Switzer**, best known for being the first woman to officially enter and run the Boston Marathon in 1967, will speak at the HOPE fundraiser scheduled for Thursday, May 17, beginning at 6 p.m. at the Great Wolf Lodge New England, 150 Great Wolf Drive, Fitchburg.

Now 71 years old, **Switzer** still runs actively, having recently competed in the London Marathon. Over the course of her life, she has promoted gender equality largely through initiatives aimed at expanding opportunities for women to run, which she said has created "nothing less than social revolution."

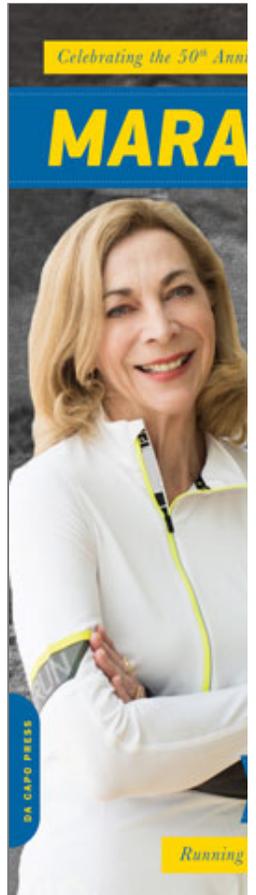
"That's my biggest contribution, to empower many millions of women," **Switzer** said. The simple act of getting outside and being active was a driving force in **Switzer's** life from an early age.

"Running always made me feel very, very empowered and like I could overcome anything in my life as long as I ran," she said.

Having spent time training as a student at Syracuse University, **Switzer** decided at age 20 she wanted to run the 1967 Boston Marathon.

In society at that time, the notion of a woman running for such a long distance of 26.2 or the possibility not even thought of.

Women were considered too frail to achieve such a thing. **Switzer** said people did not appropriate for women to sweat" the way men did.



+ click to enlarge

Courtesy photo
Kathrine Switzer, who
officially enter and run
will speak at the fundrai
cover of her book, "Ma

EXTRAS



Beat The Forecaster

Signing her name as "K.V. **Switzer**," she was able to register for the Boston Marathon was her understanding she was not doing anything technically illegal under the rules.

But on race day, she said, she was attacked by a race official "simply because I was a number."

The image of the official trying to rip off her race number was captured by the press as most remembered images in American sports history. **Switzer's** boyfriend at the time, defended her from the attack.

Switzer described the moment as a "very, very traumatic experience" and said she was the course of a marathon."

She said she entered the race just wanting to run and was not trying to make a political encounter with the official made her realize the social significance of what she was doing.

"I felt very strongly to finish the race because if I didn't, nobody would believe women

After completing the race, **Switzer** would go on to achieve continued success as a runner in the 1974 New York City Marathon.

Her larger legacy has been her social advocacy, which all stems from that incident at the time she said "served to radicalize me."

In the 1970s, **Switzer** spearheaded a global series of races across 27 countries for women's corporate sponsorship.

That exposure helped lead to the women's marathon being included in the Olympics for the first time.

In 2017 at the age of 70, **Switzer** ran the Boston Marathon again, 50 years after the first time. In many years, she has served as a commentator for the Boston Marathon for WBZ-TV.

Currently, **Switzer** works as the founder of 261 Fearless, an organization that provides support for women to run around the world.

Switzer has also had a career as an author and public speaker. She praised the work of women who enact really big change with a small group of people."

HOPE CEO Christian Orobello said the upcoming event is about spreading a message of hope and that participants in HOPE programs will be in attendance.

"I think she's a pretty inspiring person," he said of **Switzer**.

Orobello said the annual event is the largest fundraiser that HOPE does to support its programs and to raise between \$40,000 and \$50,000.

HOPE is currently in the process of renovating the former Shooter's Billiards property at 33 Parker St. in Gardner to become its new home. HOPE purchased the property a few years ago.

Orobello said the May 17 event will start at 6 p.m. and end around 9 p.m. In addition to the run, there will include a dinner and musical performance by the female singing group Divas with a special guest.

Tickets are still available to the public at \$75 per person. They can be purchased at www.HOPEfulBoutique.com, at 33 Parker St. in Gardner.

Life

[Home](#) | [Site Search](#) | [Login](#) | [Login Help](#) | [Edit Password](#) | [C](#)

The Gardner News, Inc.
309 Central Street
P.O. Box 340

For subscription information please call (978) 630-1200.
To contact us by phone (978) 632-8000.
To send a fax to editorial (978) 630-5410.