

SUMMER / FALL 2026

HOW THE BIG SUR MARATHON FOUNDATION GIVES BACK YEAR-ROUND

Every spring and fall, thousands of runners gather in Monterey County with a common goal – crossing the finish line. From the iconic **Big Sur International Marathon** each April to the **Monterey Bay Half Marathon** every November, participants travel from around the world to experience breathtaking coastal views, challenge themselves, and become part of a tradition that has defined Monterey County for decades.

What many people don't realize is the work being done between race weekends.

While race-day events last only a few hours, the efforts of the Big Sur Marathon Foundation (BSMF) strengthen the community year-round. Guided by its mission to enrich and empower the

community through charitable giving and inspire healthy lifestyles, the Foundation reinvests race proceeds into Monterey County through youth running programs, grants, coaching initiatives, nonprofit partnerships, and community wellness efforts. Since its establishment in 1986, BSMF has reinvested more than **\$7.2 million** into the community. This year alone, local volunteer groups will receive over \$432,000 in donations for their race-related support and an additional \$219,000 in funding awarded through BSMF's new Community Grants Program, **bringing projected charitable giving in 2026 to more than \$650,000**. Grant recipients represent a

Mission Statement: To enrich and empower our community through charitable giving and to inspire a passion for healthy lifestyles by creating memorable running experiences.

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broad cross-section of organizations serving Monterey County residents, with funded projects including youth sports and outdoor recreation, mentoring programs, adaptive fitness for individuals living with Parkinson's Disease, environmental education, family respite services, school wellness initiatives, trail stewardship, human trafficking prevention education, and programs that connect children and families with healthy, active lifestyles.

Among the funded initiatives are projects that will expand access to parks and outdoor spaces for Salinas families, strengthen youth mentoring opportunities, support adaptive exercise programs for older adults, enhance school athletic programs, create new trail and outdoor recreation opportunities, provide environmental education experiences, and help young people discover the lifelong benefits of movement and time spent in nature. To read the full story, [visit our website](#).

BSMF's commitment to empowering youth also extends through its collaboration with the **Boys & Girls Clubs of Monterey County**. Throughout the summer, Foundation-supported programming introduces nearly **200 children each day** to movement, teamwork, and healthy lifestyles through age-specific activities led by dedicated coaches.

"We use movement, games, and physical activity as tools to build confidence, healthy habits, teamwork, leadership, and a sense of belonging," said **Bertrand Newson**, BSMF Community Engagement Manager. "Every student is welcome regardless of athletic ability or experience."

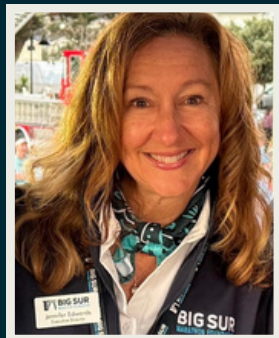


Beyond youth programs, BSMF continues to strengthen Monterey County through partnerships with organizations such as the **American Red Cross Northern California Coastal Region**. They have co-hosted blood drives, offered Hands-Only CPR training at race expos, and created educational resources that earned the Big Sur Marathon Foundation the **2026 Red Cross Community Engagement Award**.

While the Foundation has spent 40 years giving back to Monterey County, its work is far from over. Through continued community partnerships, youth programs, coaching initiatives, and scholarship opportunities, the Big Sur Marathon Foundation continues to prove that its greatest impact happens long after the finish line.



A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Friends of the **Big Sur Marathon Foundation**,

It's hard to believe that 18 months have passed since I accepted the role of Executive Director of the Big Sur Marathon Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization deeply rooted in the Monterey County community. I am honored and humbled to help advance its legacy of promoting health, fitness, and community enrichment through world-class endurance events. These efforts are rooted in the belief that great things happen when people move with purpose – and when they give back. To our all-volunteer Board of Directors and Events Committee, our race operations team, sponsors, volunteers, donors, community champions, and race participants: thank you for welcoming me so warmly and for your unwavering support since I joined this incredible team in February of 2025.

The sold-out 39th Big Sur International Marathon once again brought together a remarkable global community to experience the beauty and challenge of California's iconic Highway 1. Behind every unforgettable race experience were more than 2,000 volunteers who dedicated their time and expertise – from pre-race setup and expo support to race-day operations, entertainment, and post-race wrap-up. Their commitment created the unique spirit that defines race weekend and inspires runners from around the world. Thanks to their efforts, along with the support of our sponsors and community champions, the marathon continues to fuel the Foundation's mission and reinvest in the Monterey County community. The 2026 marathon hosted runners from all 50 states and 36 countries and featured "Team BSMF", our inaugural team of charity fundraising runners. These eight participants raised a total of \$17,645 to support our year-round Community Fitness programming efforts.

I'm also excited to share that there are six legacy runners, affectionately known as our **Grizzled Vets**, who have completed every single BSIM: **Pierre D'Avenas, Jake McGuire, Manny Ramirez, Mike Suchomel, Donna Troyna, and Bob Utley** – we look forward to celebrating your 40th finish in 2027!

As we approach another sold-out Monterey Bay Half Marathon event weekend this fall, I am delighted to welcome new and returning participants to experience one of the most beautiful courses in the country. Please keep us in mind if you're interested in volunteering for or contributing to our upcoming Monterey Bay Half Marathon weekend, November 6-8, 2026.

With gratitude,
Jennifer Edwards
Executive Director



Please consider [making a gift to Big Sur Marathon Foundation today to support our Community Fitness programs!](#)

BSMF PRESENTS 2ND ANNUAL HALL HALF MARATHON



Thirteen young men at **Monterey County Juvenile Hall** accomplished something that fewer than one percent of people will ever do: complete a half marathon.

The runners crossed the finish line on July 31 at the second annual **Monterey County Juvenile Hall Half Marathon**, known as **The Hall Half**, an event created by the Big Sur Marathon Foundation to use running as a catalyst for confidence, resilience and personal growth.

Supported by **Big Sur Marathon Foundation** staff, board members, interns, volunteers and the dedicated team at Monterey County

Juvenile Hall, the participants completed 13.1 miles over multiple laps, with every mile marked by encouragement from volunteers and every finisher celebrated by family, staff and supporters. “The Hall Half is about so much more than running,” said **Jennifer Edwards**, Executive Director of the Big Sur Marathon Foundation. “Watching these young men set an ambitious goal, commit to the training, and ultimately cross the finish line is incredibly inspiring. The discipline, confidence and sense of connection they build through this experience are lessons that extend far beyond race day. We are honored to be part of their journey and excited to see where it takes them next.”

The runners, who proudly call themselves the **Concrete Steppers**, each received a custom finisher medal, certificate and race shirt during a post-race celebration recognizing their achievement. This year’s finisher shirts were generously donated by Fleet Feet Monterey, while training plans and custom race bibs were provided by BSMF staff



member, **Bertrand “Coach B” Newson**, whose support helped make the event even more memorable. The Hall Half is designed as the first step in a longer running journey. Each participant has been invited to continue training by participating in the Monterey Bay Half Marathon, with the ultimate goal of someday completing the Big Sur International Marathon. That pathway has already proven successful. Last year’s Hall Half winner, Brayan, continued his training after the inaugural event and went on to complete the Big Sur International Marathon, demonstrating what is possible through commitment and continued support.

“The energy at the finish line was unforgettable,” Edwards said. “Every person cheering, every volunteer encouraging another lap and every young man refusing to give up reminded us why this program matters. We couldn’t be prouder of each of these athletes, and we look forward to supporting them as they continue their running journeys.” The Big Sur Marathon Foundation extends its gratitude to the staff of Monterey County Juvenile Hall, Fleet Feet Monterey, volunteers, donors and community partners whose support made the second annual Hall Half possible.



THE HEART BEHIND THE FINISH LINE: HOW OVER 2,000 VOLUNTEERS BRING BSMF EVENTS TO LIFE

When you consider running an event like the Big Sur International Marathon, the excitement of the race, the feeling of pushing your body to its maximum potential, the sense of accomplishment, or perhaps the community and camaraderie, may come to mind. What you may not realize is that behind every memorable race experience are thousands of volunteers, community groups, sponsors, and supporters who make it all possible.

The Big Sur Marathon Foundation (BSMF) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a mission “to enrich and empower our community through charitable giving and to inspire a passion for healthy lifestyles by creating memorable running experiences.” As an organization rooted in service to the community, relationships with volunteers and volunteer groups are essential to fulfilling that mission.

Each year, **more than 2,000 volunteers** representing **100+ community groups** help bring its events to life. These include Big Sur International Marathon weekend held in late April and the Monterey Bay Half Marathon in November. On race days, volunteers assist with aid stations, bus loading, medical support, gear check, finisher medallions, waste sorting, and so much more.



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Pre-race volunteers help with start and finish set-up, participant shirt distribution, and packet pick-up.

All volunteer groups receive a donation from BSMF as a thank-you for their support. To date, the Big Sur Marathon Foundation has reinvested **\$7.2 million** into the community, including donations to its many volunteer groups, since its founding in 1986.

BSMF volunteers, however, are not limited to these specific volunteer groups. The Foundation's **13 all-volunteer Board of Directors** and its **80+ Events Committee Members** are key to all the behind-the-scenes work that happens before, during, and after its events.

"What inspires me most about the Big Sur International Marathon is the grassroots spirit of service that powers our event each year. In 2026, we celebrated record-breaking volunteer participation, bringing together a wonderful mix of legacy groups that have supported us for decades, new community organizations joining for the first time, and hundreds of individuals who simply wanted to give back," says **Bertrand "Coach B" Newson**, BSMF Community Engagement Manager.

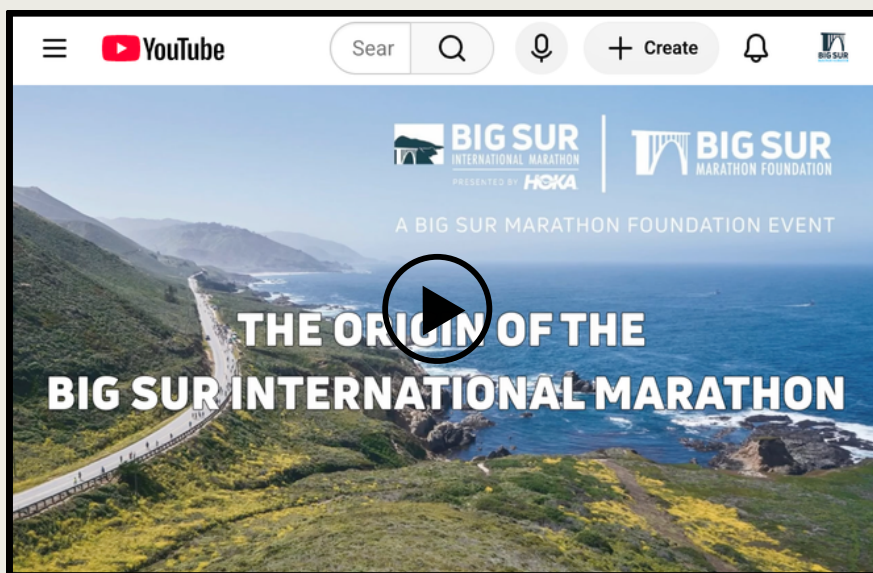
"Together, they represent the very best of Monterey County. Their passion and generosity create an unforgettable experience for runners from around the world."



CELEBRATING THE 40TH RUNNING OF THE BIG SUR INTERNATIONAL MARATHON

On April 25, 2027, the Big Sur International Marathon will celebrate its 40th running, marking more than four decades of unforgettable miles along California's iconic Highway 1. What began in 1986 with 1,800 runners making the inaugural 26.2-mile journey from Big Sur to Carmel has grown into one of the world's most renowned marathons – shaped by extraordinary runners, dedicated volunteers, a resilient community, and the breathtaking coastline that has defined the experience from the very beginning. As we celebrate this milestone, we honor the people, moments, and memories that have made Big Sur so much more than a marathon.

**CURIOUS ABOUT THE HISTORY OF THE BSIM?
HEAR THE STORY AS TOLD BY RACE FOUNDERS AND HISTORIANS:**



40 YEARS OF BIG SUR STORIES

As we prepare to celebrate the 40th running of the Big Sur International Marathon, we want to hear *your* Big Sur story. Whether it was your first marathon, a race that changed your life, a family tradition, an unforgettable volunteer experience, or a moment along Highway 1 you'll never forget, share your memories with us for a chance to be featured as part of our 40th running celebration.

Send your story to media@bsim.org.

BE A PART OF THE CELEBRATION!

If your name wasn't selected through the drawing, there are still ways to be part of this historic race: join a team through our [Charity Program](#), which offers the opportunity to experience Big Sur while helping support the Big Sur Marathon Foundation's mission-driven programs and community impact throughout Monterey County.



TEAM BSMF

Our first-ever **BSIM Charity Fundraising Team** of eight ran the 2026 BSIM and raised over **\$17,000** for our BSMF Community Fitness programming efforts here in Monterey County!

Many thanks to all team members for your amazing efforts and incredible dedication to our cause! And a special thank you to team captains **Tom Clifford** and BSMF Intern, **Elly Pick**

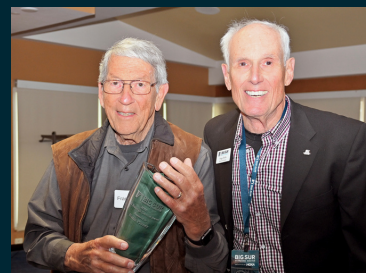
We're seeking **20 marathon runners** and **10 participants** for the **11-Miler** to join the team in 2027. **Apply Now!**

AWARDS SPOTLIGHT

Bill Burleigh Service Award: BSMF's second annual Bill Burleigh Service Award was presented to **Frank Pinney**, a retired marine and early volunteer of the Big Sur Fire Brigade with 50 years of service (the last 17 as Chief). Frank was also recognized as the de facto "Mayor" of Big Sur and played an incredibly important role in helping to convince local business owners – and the Monterey County Board of Supervisors – to keep Hwy 1 closed until 1PM to ensure runner and volunteer safety.

American Red Cross Community Engagement Award: BSMF was honored to receive this year's award in recognition of our efforts to promote safety and community preparedness through expanded community outreach programs, including Hands-Only CPR awareness and training, sponsored blood drives, and the addition of Red Cross volunteers as part of our on-course medical bike teams.

2025 Volunteer Of The Year: BSMF was proud to present its first-ever Volunteer of the Year Award to **Patte Kronlund**, former Executive Director of the Community Association of Big Sur (CABS). Throughout her years of service, Patte worked diligently to make the BSIM what it is today, while leading the Big Sur Grant Committee with unwavering dedication and passion. BSMF extends its heartfelt congratulations to Patte on her retirement from CABS and thanks her for her lasting contributions to the Big Sur community.



Frank Pinney and Hugo Ferlito



Jordan Chan, Jennifer Edwards, Michele Averill and Mimi Hahn



Sharen Carey and Patte Kronlund

TIMBER FIRE UPDATE: We Are Standing With Big Sur – As the Big Sur community continues to fight the Timber Fire, we invite you to support the organizations working tirelessly to provide relief and recovery assistance. If you're able, please consider making a donation to one of the four local organizations listed below. Together, we can help our neighbors recover and preserve the resilient spirit of the place we all love. ❤️

Big Sur Fire | Big Sur Community Health Center | Community Association of Big Sur | The Big Share