

Nomination
Category

Community Advocate

Through words and actions, individuals nominated for this award improved Muskoka and/or the lives of its residents.

will have championed a cause or activity that has



**Kyra Watters
Rich Trenholm**

The Ironman 70.3 Muskoka draws hundreds of people to the Huntsville area, generates thousands of dollars, and it likely wouldn't exist this year without the efforts of Rich Trenholm and Kyra Watters.

When the 2011 Ironman was in danger of being lost to another host community last fall, the pair stepped in to create TriMuskoka and keep the event running.

"I had heard that there was a possibility that this race was going to be cancelled due to a lack of funds to pay the licensing fee to keep it here," says Trenholm.

"I knew there were other communities interested and waiting in the wings to take this race from us. I said, 'wait a minute, there are a lot of volunteers and the town who have put a great deal of time and money into these events.'"

An active triathlete himself, Trenholm and his coach, Kyra Watters, took it upon themselves to drum up the \$50,000 registration fee required to keep the Ironman running.

"I didn't think it was right that something as simple as a licensing fee should stop it," he says.

After much poking and prodding



Kyra Watters and Rich Trenholm worked together to keep the Ironman 70.3 Muskoka in Huntsville for 2011.

of local officials, Trenholm found out that the race licensing fee had previously been funded through grants acquired by the town.

"The intention all along was to have the private sector, who mainly benefits from having the race here, take over the licensing fee," says Trenholm. "There wasn't a great plan in place to transition from the town to an organizing body to get the money."

Despite being a father and a physician, Trenholm shoehorned the role of fundraiser onto his plate. Trenholm managed to balance dealing with race organizers, major sponsors, and town and district employees, all while keeping volunteers motivated to raise funds from potential sponsors.

Meanwhile, Watters, who runs a home-based marketing business, supervised the development of

TriMuskoka's website, sponsorship package, promotional materials and advertising campaign.

She also brought her contacts in the business world outside and was able to convince two major sponsors to provide nearly half of the outstanding funds.

In the end, TriMuskoka was able to pull out the necessary funds and the race went forward as planned in September.

With events held annually across the area, including Bala, Gravenhurst and Bracebridge, Muskoka is quickly gaining a reputation as a mecca for triathlons, says Trenholm.

"It generates such a huge amount of money for the local economy," he says. "Per capita there are more triathlons in Muskoka than anywhere else in North America."

For Trenholm, the hours of work are worth it, simply for the love of the sport.

"I don't know why I do it," he says. "I guess it's just so I can have the pleasure of riding and racing through the best hills and water in Ontario."

Rich Trenholm and Kyra Watters are the recipients of the Muskoka Award in the Community Advocate category. They were also nominated in the Sports and Recreation category.

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