

PRESS RELEASE
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VCPM Inc. - Game Changers
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GAME CHANGERS COACHES OFFICIALLY PARTNER WITH CREDIT UNION CHERRY BLOSSOM 10 MILE & 5K

January 17, 2025 — The Game Changers program is proud to announce its Women of Color (WOC) certified coaches as the official leaders for the 10 Mile and 5K training programs at the 2025 Credit Union Cherry Blossom (CUCB). This is the 3rd year of this partnership, which highlights a shared commitment to making long-distance running more inclusive and reaching a wider range of people.

Driving Change Together

Game Changers and CUCB have joined forces to promote diversity in running leadership. Together, they are setting an example for other races by demonstrating how events can embrace inclusion and reach more people without having to build new programs from scratch. Through this partnership, CUCB is actively supporting the rise of Women of Color as leaders and experts in the running community.

Phil Stewart, CUCB Race Director, emphasized the importance of this collaboration: “The Credit Union Cherry Blossom 10 Mile and 5K race is excited to continue its relationship with Game Changers by sponsoring more Women of Color to go through the RRCA Coaching Certification Program. We believe that our continued sponsorship will increase the diversity of running coaches who will be able to reach out to a wide group of runners.”

New Leadership

Kimela West and Carlamae Aguinaldo, experienced Game Changers coaches, will lead the 10 Miler coaching program. Yasmin Boakye, a Game Changers coach known for her advocacy in creating accessible urban outdoor spaces for Black women and a 2024 Cherry Blossom Ambassador, will guide the 5K program.

In addition, fellow Game Changers coach and 2024 CUCB Ambassador, Mahogany Blank will join CUCB’s 5k operations team. All four women bring years of expertise and a commitment to improving the lives of runners and fostering growth in the running community.

Coach Kimela West shared her excitement: "As a coach for busy, working moms and individuals, I have the privilege of helping people navigate the challenges of fitting in time for fitness. One of the great things about running is its flexibility—it can be done anytime and anywhere. I’m thrilled to bring this perspective to the Cherry Blossom community and support participants in reaching their goals.”

Coach Carlamae Aguinaldo added, "My goal as a coach isn’t necessarily to help runners hit a PR or run longer distances, although those are likely outcomes. My focus is to empower runners to believe in themselves and equip them with the mental and physical tools to set and achieve their running goals."

Coach Yasmin Boakye, leading the 5K program, added, "I'm passionate about making sure that runners

stay happy and healthy throughout their training. It's incredibly rewarding to see people achieve their goals while fitting training into the rest of their lives. I'm looking forward to engaging with runners this winter and helping them enjoy every moment of preparing for the runner's rite of spring!"

Creating Lasting Change

Increasing representation in coaching allows races to connect with a broader range of runners, offering them role models they can relate to and creating a more inclusive, welcoming environment where every participant feels seen and supported.

Through the leadership of these coaches in such a prominent race, this partnership sets a new standard for the relationship with road races, runners, and coaches, further strengthening the sport.

Running Credit Union Cherry Blossom

The 2025 Credit Union Cherry Blossom will take place on April 5 and 6, 2025, in Washington, D.C., featuring the 5K on Saturday, April 5, and the iconic 10 Mile race on Sunday, April 6. With Game Changers coaches leading training programs and contributing to the 5k operations team, the CUCB event continues to foster an inclusive and diverse running community. For more information on the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Run, visit: <https://www.cherryblossom.org/>. While entries for the 2025 10 Mile and Double Blossom are closed (5K registration is open), charity entries are available for the 10 Mile which benefit the Credit Union Cherry Blossom official event charity, the Children's Miracle Network Hospitals. For more information, visit:

<https://raceroster.com/events/2025/72646/credit-union-cherry-blossom/register?event=314159>

About Game Changers:

Game Changers is a pioneering program by Vanessa C. Peralta-Mitchell Inc. (VCPM Inc.), dedicated to empowering Women of Color in the running coaching industry. By fostering a community of expertise, mentorship, and business strategy, Game Changers aims to create a more inclusive and representative coaching landscape. The program equips Women of Color with the tools, knowledge, and confidence to transform from runners to certified run coaches, reshaping the industry for the better.

For more information about the Game Changers program, please visit

<https://vcpm.com/game-changers>

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About Credit Union Cherry Blossom:

The Credit Union Cherry Blossom, organized by Cherry Blossom, Inc., a 501(c)(3) chapter of the Road Runners Club of America, is known as "The Runner's Rite of Spring®" in the Nation's Capital. The staging area for the 10 Mile is on the Washington Monument Grounds and the course passes in sight of all of the major Washington, D.C. Memorials. The 5K begins at Freedom Plaza and proceeds down Pennsylvania Ave. to the U.S. Capitol building, tracing the route of Presidential Inaugurations. The event

serves as a fundraiser for the Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals, a consortium of 170 premier children’s hospitals across North America. About one-third of the funds raised support Washington, D.C.’s own Children’s National (“Children’s Hospital”). The event also funds the Road Runners Club of America’s “RunPro Camp,” a program to teach top recently-graduated U.S. collegiate distance runners about life as a professional runner.

Credit Union Miracle Day, Inc., a consortium of credit unions and credit union suppliers, is the title sponsor of the Credit Union Cherry Blossom 10 Mile, 5K and Kids Run. Presenting sponsors include ASICS and Wegmans; supporting sponsors include PSCU|CO-OP Solutions, TruStage, Outside, Potomac River Running, Gatorade Endurance, Suburban Solutions Moving, Select Event Group, United Lifestyle Brands and The Westin Washington DC Downtown hotel.

The 10 Mile is sanctioned by [USA Track & Field](#) and the [Road Runners Club of America](#) and is a proud member of the [PRRO Circuit](#), a series of this country’s classic road races with circuit stops in Jacksonville, FL; Washington, DC; Spokane, WA; Utica, NY; and Davenport, IA. The 5K was voted the Best 5K in the country by a 2023 *USA Today* poll.

To learn more, visit <https://www.cherryblossom.org/>.

About Credit Union Miracle Day:

Credit Union Miracle Day is a partnership of over 100 credit unions, CUSOs and partner organizations united to sponsor the Credit Union Cherry Blossom 10 Mile & 5K benefitting Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals nationwide and promoting the difference credit unions make in their communities.

About Credit Unions:

Credit unions are financial cooperatives that provide consumers choices for financial services such as checking accounts, investments and loans of all kinds including mortgages. Funds are federally insured, but unlike banks, there are no stockholders at credit unions. Earnings are returned to member-owners in the form of lower loan rates, higher savings rates, low or no-fee products and services. The credit union philosophy of placing members’ needs first is why more than 139 million Americans do their banking at a credit union.

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