

Visitors Enjoy Land Trust Hospitality

By opening their homes to guests during Grandma's Marathon, more than 30 community members raised almost \$5,000 to support Northern Communities Land Trust's affordable housing work in 2007. Some of our hosts rent spare bedrooms in their homes, while others rent out their entire homes. Guests can reserve their rooms for one or two nights.

Longtime Land Trust members Angie Miller and Steve O'Neil have hosted runners the past three years for the fundraiser, and they signed up to host again in 2008. "It's a fun way to support runners, help the Land Trust, and make new friends," Angie said.

Angie and Steve support marathoners in several ways. The past few years, Steve volunteered at the CHUM (Churches United in Ministry) water station. The couple's home is just a block away from the race route, which makes a convenient location for both runners and fans. "Last year, we watched for our guest, Phil, in the race and cheered him on," Angie said. "We bonded."

Guest Phil Taylor of Council Bluffs, Iowa, heard about the Land Trust's lodging option through the Hampton Inn. The hotel referred him to the Land Trust because they were booked for the weekend, as were most, if not all, hotels in the area.

"It was very easy," Phil said. "The Land Trust sent me all the info I needed in the mail. Angie and Steve were great—I was only there two days, but when I left, I felt like I was leaving family members."

Steve said the couple enjoyed getting to know Phil. "We shared a couple of meals," he said. "We've gotten along well with all our Grandma's Marathon guests."

Angie appreciates the way the Land Trust organizes the event. "Phil called a few days ahead of time to let us know when he would get here, and he had already looked up directions on MapQuest because the Land Trust sent him our address. It was easy!"

Phil exchanged Christmas cards with Angie and Steve, and planned to stay with them again in 2008. Because of an injury, he decided not to run in the marathon this year, however.



"I'd recommend the Land Trust to anyone who needs a place to stay during Grandma's," Phil said. "It's a great experience—first on the economic side, because you get a good deal and are helping the Land Trust, and also because of the camaraderie and potential for a relationship with your hosts. They're super people."

If you'd like to open your home during our Grandma's Marathon lodging fundraiser in 2008 (June 20-22), please contact Julie at 218-727-5372.