

One Flame Lights Up a Nation

Participating in the Olympic torch relay has special meaning for this pastor

BY TYLER RODY

In the summer of 2009, I noticed commercials on TV advertising opportunities to carry the Olympic torch. I thought this would be an awesome chance to be a part of a worldwide historic tradition, so I applied. I encouraged many people to sign up for this adventure of a lifetime. They seemed excited, but I was surprised how few took the small amount of time needed to sign up.

I received an email inviting me to submit a short essay focusing on active living and being environmentally friendly. Involved as I am in youth ministry helped me in my response since we host many activities encouraging kids to live active lives and to be respectful of God's beautiful creation.

I anxiously awaited an answer,

but as September came and went I assumed I had not been accepted. Much to my surprise, I received a congratulatory notification just before Thanksgiving.

I was extremely excited! Not only would this be an amazing and rare opportunity to be involved in the Olympic Games, but I also anxiously anticipated how I would be able to let my light shine in our community and give God all the glory for the great things he has done in my life. For me personally, the Olympic torch relay has an extra special meaning.

When I was four years old, I was very sick and weighed only 24 pounds. My body was unable to keep food down and my condition was serious. During this time, the Olympic torch passed through my

hometown of Lloydminster, Alberta. However, because of my potentially terminal condition, I was unable to attend the torch relay.

But now, 22 years after the Calgary Olympic Games and torch relay, I truly thank God that I am alive and was able to take part as a torchbearer for the 2010 Olympic Games. I carried the torch on January 7, 2010 in Roland, Manitoba. This experience opened up the opportunity to utilize my relationships I've been building in our community over the past five years, to share my story with all the Jr. High and elementary kids (about 500) in our community and to be a part of our community celebration.

Many people describe carrying the Olympic torch as a "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity" and "so amazing it cannot be put into words." I would definitely agree it was a great and monumental occasion. And WOW, was it cold—minus 42 with the wind chill! However, the indescribable rush of carrying the Olympic torch doesn't even compare to being forgiven from sin and following Christ.

I know quite a few people who, after realizing how easy it was, were regretful they hadn't applied to carry the torch. The truth is many people sit idly while life passes them by and they miss out on other monumental opportunities. I hope and pray the Olympic Games will continue to live on, not because of the medals won or lost, or because of the Olympic torch, but because men and women around our country were able to let their lights shine and give glory to God for his great love for us. ☩

Rev. Tyler Rody is Associate Pastor at Virden Alliance Church in Virden, Manitoba

<< Tyler Rody carrying the Olympic flame

The 2010 Olympic Winter Games were held in Vancouver and Whistler, BC. And as is tradition, the Olympic torch relay began in preparation for the games. It started in Olympia, Greece and travelled through Canada in what would be the longest torch relay in the history of the Olympic Games. Starting in Victoria on October 30, 2009 it travelled up the West Coast, across Northern Canada to the East Coast, made its way through to Ontario, the Prairies, and ultimately arriving in Vancouver on February 12, 2010. The torch relay took place over 106 days, was carried by more than 12,000 torchbearers, linked in excess of 1,000 communities and travelled over 45,000 kilometers.



Photo by Michelle Rody