

Running out of time – 13.1 miles to save a child's life



Half way in the half marathon

On Sunday 12 October, more than 12,500 runners headed through London's historic parks in the first Royal Parks Half Marathon. Among their number were 20 fit DHLers, each raising at least £550 for UNICEF in the process. This money will now be matched by the DHL UK Foundation, bringing the total raised to an excellent £25,000 and possibly a little bit more.

The runners, which included top athletes and celebrities, ran 13.1 miles through four historic Royal Parks, starting in Hyde Park, racing through Green Park and St James's Park, along the Thames, past the London Eye, back to the historic Albert Memorial in Kensington Gardens and finishing once again in Hyde Park. It was the first competitive event to be held by the Royal Parks Foundation – 500 years after the hunting quests of the court of Henry VIII.

The event was organised to raise money for the Royal Parks Foundation and more than 150 other charities. 500 places had been allocated to UNICEF. Because of DHL's unique partnership with the children's charity 20 employees joined team UNICEF.

Kenyan long distance runner John Muriithi – training partner of Beijing Olympic record holder Samuel Wanjiru - was hot favourite to cross the line first, even though

he competed dressed as a rabbit. Muriithi boasts an impressive half marathon personal best of 1:03, but came in first at 01:10:19 on the day (the sack of carrots must have slowed him down). While none of the DHL team quite matched that time, Dave Hamilton came in with a very impressive 01:17:13.

Dave, of the Retail and Consumer division, is no stranger to running (being known as the Knowsley Flying Machine is a giveaway), and was absolutely delighted to come back first for team UNICEF and in the overall top ten.

“It wasn’t bad for a morning jog,” he joked after the event. “The support from the crowd was amazing and the noise from the UNICEF supporters gave me a real boost. When I crossed the line I was on my own, so that cheer from a sea of people was all for me – brilliant!”

A still weary Andy Sankey, also from Knowsley added, “Meeting up with the other DHL runners and knowing you are raising money for a good cause keeps you focussed.

“For me, running past all those amazing landmarks; Big Ben, the London Eye, Buckingham Palace, was a total highlight. Once I’ve caught my breath I hope to do a full marathon within the year.”

Mayor of London Boris Johnson commented: “London’s green spaces bring pleasure to millions of people's lives, as well as being a vital green lung for the capital, and the Royal Parks provide some of the finest green spaces anywhere in the world. The Royal Parks Half Marathon is an excellent way to celebrate their historic and abiding role in London life and is another great public sporting event to add to the calendar as we build up to the 2012 Games.”

In September 2006 DPWN entered into a global partnership with UNICEF, aiming to provide long-term assistance in its worldwide fight to reduce child mortality. DPWN support UNICEF in a variety of ways including: providing logistics as an in-kind donation, implementing a global donation programme and enabling employee volunteers to support health and education initiatives in the field.

Organisers said the race was environmentally friendly, with runners' shirts made from bamboo fibre and race medals from pine.

Useful Links

www.unicef.org

www.royalparkshalf.com

www.dpwn.com/society

Royal Parks Half Marathon October 2009

Would you like to join the UNICEF Royal Parks team and run the half marathon in October 2009? Full details about how to register for our 2009 team will be available shortly. To register your interest now, please email nicky.donovan@dhl.com, quoting '2009 Royal Parks' in the subject line, and provide your contact details. We'll get in touch once our registration process has opened so you can be one of the first to register.

Runners:

Congratulations to all the DHL runners who made it across the finish line – the roll of honour is (with time in brackets):

Shola Alli, DHL Global Forwarding; 03:23:19

Lee Butterworth, Consumer; 02:26:00

Toni Clayton, Tradeteam; 02:23:00

Spencer Conday, M&S; 01:53:00

Vanessa Crispin, Department Stores & Fashion; 03:00:00

Rob Franklin, Consumer; 01:51:45

Alan Graham, Technology; 01:53:03

David Hamilton, Consumer; 01:17:13

Sue Harwood, Technology; 02:54:05

Richard Holtom, Home Delivery; 02:41:00

Emma King, DHL Express; 02:06:00

Kevin Moffatt, Pensioner; (to be confirmed)

Liz Noble, DHL Exel Supply Chain; 03:00:00

Dean Partington, Industrial; 01:47:00

Pragnesh Patel, Technology; 01:54:00

Rob Pearce, NHS Supply Chain; 01:50:50

Andy Sankey, Consumer; 01:49:07

Kelvin Sidaway, Technology; 02:31:09

Stephen SurrIDGE, Food Retail; 01:45:48

Damien Ward, Retail & Consumer Global Sector; 02:06:00

Quotes and comments:

Spencer Conday:

“It was a truly amazing experience, in a beautiful setting with many world famous landmarks being passed (even if a little blurred at times!), in fantastic weather conditions.

“The Royal Parks run is only my 3rd long distance running event, having completed the Great South Run in Oct last year and Silverstone half marathon in Mar 08. I've never been a keen runner until recently but have always played a lot of other sports, coming with a personal best of 1hr 53mins..!!

“The inspiration to continue running through the pain barrier comes from the great support of the spectators and UNICEF supporters who help create an electric atmosphere, but more importantly that every step closer towards the finishing line is rewarded by the thought of raising money for children across the world (only a couple of hours of pain to help relieve their suffering).

“I was overwhelmed by people's response to donations last year when with the DHL Foundation's support I was able to raise £1000 for CLIC Sargent, only 'bettered' by this years total for UNICEF, which I hope will total over £3000, when collecting is finished...!!!

“The finishing stretch is over-whelming and I found my exhaustion being carried by the sense of achievement and cheers from the crowd..!!”

David Hamilton:

“I thoroughly enjoyed last Sunday's half marathon. It was a fantastic course and perfect weather.

“I actually finished 8th overall. Whatever the final result though it was a fantastic feeling running down the home straight. There were no other runners close to me so I got a cheer all of my own from the sea of people watching. All the way round the support was amazing and the noise from the UNICEF supporters gave me a real boost. It really does give you a lift when people cheer you on. It's entirely psychological I know, but it definitely helps.

“I've run a few half marathons before (the Great North Run, Liverpool half and one in the Isle of Man to name a few) and I run most weekends for my club in Merseyside, who are Southport Waterloo AC, so I was hoping for a good run - but I didn't expect top ten.

“Regardless of position or time though you've got to enjoy a run where the sites just keep appearing; Buckingham Palace, Westminster, the Embankment, Downing Street, Trafalgar Square and the Mall. Not bad for a Sunday morning jog!”

Shola Alli

“I keep thinking back as to how I got involved in running the half marathon especially as I am not a sporty person at all and I have never really run for anything except maybe catch a bus or train (and even with that I remember one day running to catch a London bus and falling over with a bad injury - and I've got the scar to prove it!)

“So what made me run the Royal Parks Half marathon in London this year? Well, two things really; firstly, for many years I have had on my cv ‘*helping young people reach their full potential*’ as one of my passions’. Secondly, I have always admired people who run and promised myself years back that one day I would get running. So when the invite came through from the DHL UK Foundation, I thought the timing was just right.

“I was not the fastest on the day and it was the hardest physical thing I've done to date but I am so proud of myself for doing it and I am sure I shocked and surprised a few people too. I would definitely encourage anyone to do it especially as it is for a good cause and you even get to keep fit too!

“It was a brilliant day and we had so much support from family, friends, colleagues and cheerers. The DHL UK Foundation will match £550 I raise and so far I have raised over £700 with donations still coming in.”

Andy Sankey

“Reason for doing the race? I have always enjoyed running but need a target to get me focused, also its good to raise money for a worthwhile cause.

“Amount raised - just over £550 which the DHL UK Foundation will double to over £1100. Finding sponsors was not the easiest as myself and Dave Hamilton (A.K.A The Knowsley Flying Machine) both work at the same site and were conscious not to tread on one another's toes while hunting down would be sponsors.

“I enjoyed the pre-race banter. It was good to meet my fellow DHL comrades prior to the off, the majority of us had never even met before but on the day we all had the same goal.

“The road part of the race (the first six miles) was definitely the best part of the race - running past Big Ben, the London Eye and Buckingham Palace was great fun.

“During the race, I started to feel the heat (it was a scorching day) around the eight

mile mark. My plan of not taking any water onboard until after eight miles backfired on me as I felt exhausted, until a Powerade refuelling station came to my rescue around the 9 1/2 mile mark. I was aiming to break 1 hour 50 minute and had just enough energy left to get home in 1 hour 49 minutes and 7 seconds.

“After the race it was good to catch up with my fellow competitors and discuss how we all performed.

“Plans for the future? Well, I want to attempt to run a full marathon within the next 12 months. “