



INSPIRATIONAL ENTRANTS

10K ONE BIG PUSH FOR HUSBAND AND WIFE TEAM



There will be a sequel to one of the most heart-warming feats from last year's Great Birmingham 10K as Donna Kerr prepares to push husband Daniel, a wheelchair user who suffers from Huntington's Disease, around the course again. The Kingstanding couple are just hoping it proves less eventful this time!

Donna's attempt to jog the entire route while pushing Daniel stalled at the 4K mark when one of the front wheels fell off. Thankfully, a resident living on the route came to the rescue, kindly providing a nut and screwing it back into place.

Donna is a part-time kitchen assistant at Maryvale Catholic Primary School but spends most of her time caring for Daniel, who has been living with the debilitating disease, which attacks nerve cells in the brain, for eight years.

She's returning to the 10K to further boost awareness of Daniel's incurable condition, which has deteriorated in the past year, and raise as much money as possible for the Huntington's Disease Association (HDA), which improves care and support services for sufferers and their families.

"Pushing Daniel while running was extremely hard but I had a long bar across the handles and other runners helped push him at regular intervals," said Donna. "There was no way I

was going to stop when the wheel came off. I would have pushed him using the back wheels if necessary. But thankfully, a kind local resident managed to fix it. A couple of runners even stayed with me to the end just in case it fell off again.”

Like last year, Donna will stop a few yards before the finish line and the couple’s five children will join her in helping 50-year-old Daniel walk across the finish line.

Donna admitted: “It will be a lot harder for Daniel as he’s not as strong as he was a year ago. He absolutely loved it last year. Runners kept giving Daniel the thumbs up as they went past and he loved thumbing back to them. These events bring everyone together.”

To sponsor Donna and Daniel: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/donna-kerr10>

A NEW TYPE OF ‘COURSE’ WORK



The University of Birmingham, Birmingham City University and Aston University all pledged to commit teams of hundreds of students, staff and alumni, to run, jog or walk the 10k.

The University of Birmingham and Birmingham City University have built on their impressive teams taking part at last year’s 10K, while Aston University has committed to the event in numbers for the first time.

Participants have benefited from training, encouragement and support over the months leading up to the event and teams include those who have taken up physical activity for the first time through to the more experienced looking to beat their personal best, with almost 600 people due to set off in a dedicated University wave.

RUNNING THROUGH RAMADAN



More than ten members of the **Saheli Hub** (formerly the Saheli Women's Group), which runs female-only running sessions in Handsworth Park on Sunday mornings and Cannon Hill Park on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, will be joining the Walking Wave.

Some 350 of last year's participants walked the route and even more are expected to join the Saheli women in the 2019 Walking Wave.

"We didn't think we'd be able to take part this year as the 10K clashes with Ramadan, which would make running over six miles very difficult, but then we discovered we could walk it instead," said Naseem Akhtar, Project Manager for Saheli Hub.

"We're calling it the Ramadan Ramble and we're really looking forward to it. Whether you're walking or running, a 10K is a brilliant event to try. If you get a taste for it, it is a great stepping stone for the Great Birmingham Run half marathon in October.

"We welcome runners and walkers of all abilities to our weekly sessions and we've got a great mixture of first-timers and more experienced runners walking the route on Sunday."

PENNY TARGETS MEDAL TO START 70TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS



It's been almost 42 years since Penny Forse competed at her one and only Olympics, but the 69-year-old will again be gunning for international honours in Brum.

Penny, as a part-time athlete under maiden name Yule, represented Great Britain in the women's 1,500m at the 1976 Montreal games. This weekend, she has qualified for the England Masters team and will compete against a Celtic Nations Composite Team in the 65-69 category.

"My last senior race was finishing seventh at the 1980 World Cross Country Championships in Paris because, shortly after that, I became pregnant with my first child," said the Southampton-based former research assistant, who celebrates her 70th birthday next month.

"I was coached by my husband Alan, who is the World Masters 75-79 200m and 400m Bronze medallist. Apart from having three children, I've remained active but only got back into competing at Masters Internationals in the past five years. In March, I became world 65-69 champion at the 10K road race in Poland.

"Hopefully, the Birmingham crowds can cheer the England Masters runners onto victory! I competed at Alexandra Stadium a couple of times in my 20s and Birmingham should be very excited about hosting the Commonwealth Games. With the city located at the centre of the country, it's great that it's coming to Birmingham."

INSPIRATIONAL STUDENT STEPPING OUT OF COMFORT ZONE



Final year business & management student, Nadya Cohen, is running to raise awareness of mental health issues among under graduates, after speaking openly about her own battles.

Nadya, approaching the end of a three-year course at Birmingham City University (BCU), said: “Running the Simplyhealth Great Birmingham 10K will be an amazing achievement to see how far I’ve come this year. I’ve really struggled with my mental health.”

Nadya started to become withdrawn from friends, family and school during her final year of A-Levels. This escalated during her first year at university, where she felt alone and isolated. Her second year was much better but since starting her final year, her mental health has progressively got worse.

“My mental health impacts my day to day life and my studies dramatically due to the fact that I have and am still struggling to get my university work completed,” she admitted.

“Uni work has taken more of a back seat unfortunately which does not help my mental health as this makes me become increasingly anxious, stressed, angry and frustrated at myself for not having the strength to do my work.”

Nadya has never been a natural runner but committed to the 10K to challenge herself. “I have always done my best to avoid the treadmill section of the gym, and even though I am absolutely terrified, I want to do my best to run the entire thing,” she added.

To sponsor Nadya: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/nadya-cohen3>

START MAYBE TRICKIER THAN FINISH FOR SERIAL RUNNER HELEN



For the vast majority of Sunday's entrants, it will be the final 2K that proves the most challenging as tired limbs strive for the Aston University finish line.

But for serial runner Helen Williams, the opening 2k can prove trickier as she has cerebral palsy, which affects movement and coordination in all four of her limbs.

Rarely a weekend goes by without the Hereford-based 45-year-old, who also has learning difficulties, entering one event or another, having just completed her second London Marathon after running the New York version in November.

And the fact the Les Croupiers Running Club member is in perpetual motion helps her manage her disorder.

"Helen just loves running and her constant training and events help keep her mobile," said mum Lynn.

"When she starts, say, a 5K Park Run, it takes the first 2K for her to get into normal running mode. Her legs are quite wobbly at the start as her muscles are extremely tight. The second half is normally faster."

Helen, who represented Great Britain at the first Paralympic World Cup in 2005, runs with a guide runner. Her next big challenge is December's Lanzarote International Marathon.

YOU'RE RUNNING ALONGSIDE HEROES OF THE NHS



Staff from Birmingham Women's and Children's NHS Foundation Trust are taking part in the Great Birmingham 10K as part of #TeamBWC.

To help promote staff health and wellbeing, this is the first time healthcare workers across Birmingham Women's and Children's NHS Foundation Trust are coming together as one united team to walk, jog or run the event.

For the first time, participants will be able to walk or run alongside the expert doctors and nurses at the two hospitals who deliver world-class care every day. Find out more at <https://www.bch.org.uk/event/teambwc>

DOING THEIR BIT FOR CHARITY



The Birmingham office of financial services giant, PwC, which will have a team of 200-plus runners and walkers taking part on behalf of city grass-roots charity LoveBrum.

Executive Director Paul Mitchell said LoveBrum is 'overwhelmed' by the support from PwC and the number of employees who have decided to take part in this year's Great Birmingham 10K in aid of the charity.