

Norwood launches 2004 Challenges Diary of sponsored sporting events

Norwood Unveils it's latest challenge with launch of the 2004 Diary of sponsored sporting events.

Norwood last month launched its Challenges Diary 2004 - a calendar packed full of exciting and exotic sponsored sporting events, offering people of all ages, interests and abilities the opportunity to 'stretch themselves for good'.

Norwood Challenges is a sub-brand of Norwood, one of the UK's leading children and family services care organisations. The Norwood Challenges Team has established itself as one of the leading exponents of sponsored sporting events in the country since first introducing the concept of a charity bike ride in 1992, when it hosted the Biblical Bike Ride in Israel. Now in its twelfth year, it enjoys a long and successful track record in organising sponsored sporting challenges. Over the years, thousands of people have pushed themselves to their limits and kept themselves fit by taking part in a Norwood Challenges event and in the process have helped to raise over £8m for some of the most disadvantaged children and adults in our community.

Launching the 2004 Challenges Diary, Jane Jaffe, Head of Challenges and Community Fundraising at Norwood said: "We call our sponsored sporting events Challenges because we ask you to challenge yourself to go that bit further in getting fit and healthy, doing something you've maybe never been done before, whilst raising money for a great cause. We're really excited by the events that we're offering for 2004. This year's Challenges diary really has something in it for everyone - from occasional cyclists to experienced travellers, from super-fit runners to adventure holidayers, from casual walkers to tandem riders."

In line with the 'stretch yourself' theme, the diary opens up like a concertina and, in order to view it fully, the recipient needs to stretch their arms out fully. Norwood Challenges is keen to stress that participating is just one way to 'stretch yourself for good'. "Sponsorship, whether individual or corporate is a great way to get involved too. The possibilities - and the fun - are endless." says Jaffe.

Bike rides are at the heart of what Norwood Challenges are all about, and the 2004 diary offers the largest selection of sponsored cycle with events at home and abroad, with opportunities for the experienced and novice cyclist alike.

For those not wanting to venture overseas, the Capital to Coast Bike Ride (formerly the BIG H) is Norwood Challenges' most ambitious domestic bike ride. Billed as 'the alternative to the London to Brighton', experienced cyclists, - and those up for the challenge of their lives - are invited to sign up for the 60 mile ride from Hampton Court to Hove, whilst for the novices, a 30 mile option is available! Meanwhile, now in its fourth year, The Monopoly Bike Ride - an almost completely flat 20 mile ride round the Monopoly Board, taking in the sites of Central London - is also a firm favourite. For those wanting a fun family day out there's The Junior Bike Ride, a ten mile all off-road cycle ride for 7-14 year olds and their parents through Bracknell Nature Reserve - just the right balance of mud, mess and mates!

Norwood Challenges is giving people the opportunity to cycle abroad too, by participating in a range of International bike rides. There's a family bike ride in Holland, or if you'd like something slightly more exotic the Norwood Challenges team are offering you the chance to ride through the breathtaking scenery in Iceland, and even the chance to cycle from Prague to Krakow, taking in the historic sites of this Eastern European routeway.

Runners and walkers are well catered for too. Norwood Challenges is offering people the chance to experience the ultimate sense of achievement by registering for the London or New York Marathons. For those not quite ready for the 26-mile challenge, the team is organising the first ever Half Marathon through London's famous Royal Parks, which will take place in Spring 2005, whilst for those wanting the challenging but not too strenuous option, there's the opportunity to register for a Weekend Walk in beautiful surroundings.

The Norwood Challenges Team is also giving keen golfers the chance to put their golfing prowess to good use. Golf Aid is the ultimate golfing challenge, to complete 90 holes over five golf courses in one day!

If you're up for the challenge of your life but golf's not your thing, Norwood Challenges is organising two ultimate challenge events - an SAS adventure challenge, including top tips on survival, navigation and camouflage under the direction of special forces officers, and the David Lloyd Day of Challenges, where people can create their own challenge using the whole range of facilities at the Bushey-based health club.

Creatively, the diary focuses on 'ordinary' people and shows how their daily lives reflect their involvement as Norwood Challenges participants, reinforcing the message that the diary offers something for everyone.

The 2004 Challenges diary is being mailed out to the Norwood Challenges database of active supporters - individuals who have participated in at least one sponsored sporting event organised by Norwood at some time over the past three years. Alongside the direct mailing, the launch of the 2004 diary is being supported by the charity's first ever tube advertising campaign.

William Jones, Head of Marketing at Norwood explains: "Norwood Challenges is perfectly summarised in the strap line "Stretch yourself for good". This represents how each year, thousands of people of all ages, nationalities and abilities, stretch themselves on Norwood's sponsored challenges whilst raising money for 'good': Norwood as a 'good' cause, and 'for good' meaning ongoing.

Building on last year's campaign which literally 'stretched' images of Challenges participants, this year the focus is on the contrast between their everyday lives and the opportunities to stretch themselves further, provided by Challenges.

Through various printed matter this new campaign shows images of participants on Challenges events stretching themselves either physically or metaphorically, and contrasts this with what they do on a daily basis. For the first time ever we're rolling out an advertising campaign using tube cards. Londoners spend a significant amount of time commuting into and back from work, and what better way to entice them into considering taking part in a exhilarating Challenge event than after a good night's sleep, or after a hard day in the office, when they might be looking for a bit of an adventure! We have also bought some free phone numbers, which will allow us to track the public's response to the launch activities. Alongside this we've developed a dedicated Norwood Challenges website - www.norwood.org.uk/challenges - replicating the diary which allows people to register, donate, and sponsor someone on-line, which will go live on 29th September. This should allow us to analyse just how successful we were in getting our message to the masses that taking part in a Norwood Challenges event is a great way to get fit, have fun and support disabled and disadvantaged children at the same time."

Adam Selwyn, Creative Director at Norwood's above and below the line communications agency Creative & Commercial expands on this saying:

"Norwood Challenges is about stretching yourself for good - participants stretch their physical boundaries whilst sponsors stretch themselves through their financial support. This year's campaign illustrates how participating in Challenges events takes you far away from everyday life, allowing you to stretch your horizons for the benefit of others. So whether it is the Challenges marathon runner who "Runs a small business" from day to day, or the rock climber who at work "climbs the corporate ladder", the campaign provides snapshots of how Challenges provides an alternative or escape."

In 2004 the Norwood Challenges Team have budgeted to raise in the region of £1m for Norwood through their sponsored sporting events.

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