

Challenge Profile:

Kilimanjaro Trek for Whizz-Kidz

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Born 1949 – Property Lawyer

The Challenge - Reach the 5895m summit of Mt. Kilimanjaro, Tanzania



My disabled son, Michael, died thirteen years ago and before he passed away I used to say "If he dies I'll climb Kilimanjaro!" but I never did and fell back into the humdrum of life until Whizz Kidz gave

me the chance to do it.

The Kilimanjaro challenge takes 10 days and involved 9 months training. The group was made up of 34 participants, all raising money for Whizz-Kidz, 8 guides, 103 porters and the whole Whizz Kidz support team - our own little sub-team of my husband and me and our four dogs who enjoyed the training!

The Charity - Whizz-Kidz

Whizz-Kidz provides customised wheelchairs, tricycles and other specialised mobility equipment, wheelchair training, information and advice to change the lives of disabled children by giving them freedom and independence.

It is a charity whose work is very close to my heart. By supporting them I wanted to repay a debt to help disabled children and their parents: when my disabled son was alive many people helped me. Also, I experienced first hand the lack of individually designed mobility equipment and had to invent design and build it myself.

Between my husband and I, we raised

over £12,500 for Whizz-Kidz and also raised lots of awareness for their work through our website.

Fundraising Tip

Put together an enthusiastic web-site diary (ours is www.rkb-law.com/kil) of all the training, the learning curves you experience, the ups and downs and then the trek itself. We sent it out (shamelessly and relentlessly!) to a huge mailing list requesting donations and keeping those who had already given updated. Also, consider contacting private charitable trusts early on so that they can fit a donation in to their yearly budget.

Diary

"The whole experience was total enlightened self-interest: the best thing I have ever done with my life benefitting a fabulous charity and fulfilling a dream and a promise to my lovely dead son."

Best Moments

From receiving the first £1000 cheque to completing a training circuit in 3 hours that had originally taken 7 hours, to the extraordinary night sky of the summit attempt with the stars and moon and moon shadows, to that Coca-cola back at base camp after the climb...nothing but highlights throughout the experience!

Hardest Moment

Forcing myself to the gym after work on a winter's day, dragging myself up Scafell Pike miles behind the rest of the team on a training weekend and the last four hours of the summit attempt when each step was an effort of will ... quite a few, really!

Biggest Problems

I had very painful knees on the way down the summit itself but also down the training peaks of Ben Nevis and Snowdon, as well as arthritic pains in my right leg throughout training and trek, diarrhoea and vomiting for two days on the trek. We also regret only taking one "flavour" of antibacterial wipes for all purposes so that the smell became associated with all functions...!

Training Tip - Invest in regular input from a personal trainer for professional advice and encouragement and don't underestimate how much harder the challenge itself will be.



Marina and her husband during their Kilimanjaro challenge