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Universal Aviation Employee to Compete in Desert Ultra Marathon to Raise Funds for Juvenile Diabetes

Orlando, Fla. (Oct. 5, 2008) – When Universal Aviation (UK) Ltd. Safety Trainer Simon Wade competed in a 200-kilometer ultra-marathon through the jungles of Brazil in 2006, his goal was merely to prove that an “out-of-shape bloke” (as he described himself) could. Next March, Wade will once again compete in an ultra-marathon – this time a 250-kilometer trek through the Atacama Desert in Chile. And while many of the struggles he will endure will be similar, Wade’s goal no longer affects just him, as this time he’s racing to raise funds for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation.

Soon after finishing his first ultra marathon in Brazil, Wade received some news that took his breath away far quicker than any endurance run he ever had.

“Not long after I returned to the UK from Brazil, I received a call from my (7-year-old) daughter Kara-Jayne’s doctor telling me that she’d been diagnosed with incurable type-1 diabetes,” said Wade. “The news sideswiped me and I lost interest in everything. I stopped training – all I wanted to do was concentrate on my daughter.”

About a year after the diagnosis, Wade received another call that would once again change his life. This time the call came from Universal Weather and Aviation, Inc. Vice Chairman Marjorie Evans, who also leads Universal’s Employee and Community Relations efforts.

“I received a call from Marjorie asking if I planned to do another event and that Universal wanted to sponsor me if I did,” said Wade. “Then I started thinking that if I do compete again, it can’t be just for me, it has to be for a greater good, and what better reason than to raise funds for juvenile diabetes?”

After researching several organizations, Wade decided all funds he raised would be donated to the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, which is the leading charitable funder and advocate of type-1 (juvenile) diabetes research worldwide.

“There are 20,000 children in the UK alone with type-1 diabetes; my goal is to raise one pound per child for a total of £20,000 (\$36,142.76),” said Wade.

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Wade, 42, began training again in February for the 7-day race, which covers a distance of 250 kilometers through the Atacama Desert in Chile, a desert 50 times more arid than Death Valley in California. Individual stages range from 10.4 kilometers through to 76.4 kilometers and runners have to be self-sufficient, carrying all they need to complete the race.

“My training consists of weights, endurance and running,” said Wade. “I can’t run all week because my body couldn’t handle it. Each day, my training can range from 30 minutes to up to six hours. The most important thing is getting used to being on your feet. The longest stage of the race is 55 miles. I’m building up to that every week in training.”

Wade, who suffered tremendous foot blistering and exhaustion in the jungle-like conditions of his first ultra marathon in Brazil, said that foot care will once again be one of the main challenges.

“Unlike the jungle, humidity will not be an issue, but we will be running in the sun up to 6-7 hours per day through sand, which will get into your shoes and grate against your feet causing blisters,” Wade explained. “Of course, hydration will also be a major challenge.”

Wade said no amount of preparation can prevent blisters, but that likewise no amount of blisters can stop him.

“I know I can cope with it - my feet will not stop me,” he said. “There is no way I will give up. My daughter has diabetes for life – the only way I will not finish is if they stop me from continuing. It just means too much to me and there are too many people affected by this disease to stop because of blisters.

“I hope people will support this great cause. I was surprised to learn just how many people throughout the world have type-1 diabetes. I’ve put the time in training and fundraising, so any help I receive to help meet this target is appreciated.”

Please help support the JDRF in its goal to find a cure for type-1 diabetes by sponsoring Wade’s desert ultra marathon via his secure Web site at <http://www.justgiving.com/run-4-diabetes>.

About the charity:

[Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation](#)

Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF) is dedicated to funding research to find a cure for type-1 (juvenile) diabetes, which strikes children suddenly, makes them insulin-dependent for life, and carries the constant threat of devastating complications.

Charity Registration No 295716

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