



LEADING BY EXAMPLE: Joel and his father, Martin Smith, tackle an adventure race. Picture: SUPPLIED

Teen runs for needy children

Selborne pupil Joel Smith to take on gruelling 100km adventure in support of Glen Eden home

MADELINE CHAPUT

It is not often that youngsters on the cusp of adulthood decide to forgo a big bash for their 18th birthday in favour of a gruelling adventure run.

But this is exactly what 18-year-old Joel Smith has decided to do — and he has chosen to run to help others.

Joel is taking on a 100km run through the Hogsback mountains in aid of the Kings Children's Home as his 18th birthday fundraiser.

Inspired by his sporty grandmother, Joel says his family had long been involved in volunteering at and assisting the local children's home, but it was his grandmother's determination that had motivated him.

"My gran, Paula Richardson, is 79 and a living legend. She is well known in local running and cycling circles and is still very active, is a keen cyclist and runs or walks most days.

"It is my gran who inspires me," the Selborne College matric pupil said.

"She and my dad, Martin, both instilled a love for being fit, active and the great outdoors in me, and I could not be more grateful to them.

"My gran recently started volunteering at the Kings Children's Home in Glen Eden out on the East Coast of East London.

"Normally a 79-year-old granny would go and read to the kids, but not my gran!

"Instead she has taken the kids for plenty of outdoor activities, including a few beach hikes, a picnic or two, a few Park Runs, and is busy nurturing a love for exercise and the outdoors in the children.

"This inspired me to use my love for the outdoors and adventure to help the less fortunate."

Taking on the Amatola Trail run in mid-October, Joel and his father will run 100km together over two days.

"The fundraiser will run for the whole month of October. It is called 'running for running costs' as the money I raise will go towards the running costs of the safe house that has more than 50 children in their care," Joel said.

"Our goal is to raise R20,000 and this will cover one month's running costs at the home, but

the more we raise the more we can help."

Living in Glen Eden near the Kings Children's Home, Joel said his mother had been involved with the facility for a few years.

"The couple who runs the home is Jono and Tracy King, who are also our pastoral

● The Kings aim to help the most vulnerable of abandoned and neglected babies and children in our society and they are a real example to us

couple at our local church, Crossways church.

"My mom has done many fundraisers for the Kings in the past, so I thought it is about time for me to do something too," he said.

"The Kings aim to help the most vulnerable of abandoned and neglected babies and children in our society and they are a real example to us of what authentic sacrificial love looks like.

"The Kings have had such an amazing impact on our community and it has shown me how truly blessed I am."

Tracy King said Joel's efforts would be an incredible help to the home. "Few people are willing to donate towards running costs because you can't see anything tangible for your donation. But the truth is that sanitation, electricity and petrol are critical for any children's home to function properly.

"Joel has caught the vision to help us pay these costs and we are so grateful for that.

"He is an incredible, humble young man who has thought of others above himself and dedicated his 18th birthday to make a difference for others. Thank you, Joel!"

To find out more or to support Joel's "Running for Running Costs" fundraiser, visit his Back a Buddy page at www.backabuddy.co.za.

The public can donate a single amount once off or pledge an amount per km.

Wheelchair Wednesday initiative arrives in East London for the first time

ROSA-KAROO LOEWE

The daily challenges for people living with disabilities may include tasks as simple as reaching for groceries on the top shelf in the supermarket, but SPAR is determined to create awareness with its Wheelchair Wednesday initiative.

SPAR events manager Alan Stapleton said the expansion to East London was an exciting addition to the initiative, which has taken place for the past 10 years every Wednesday in Gqeberha.

To commemorate its 10th year in collaboration with the Association for the Physically Disabled (APD), a wheelchair awareness day will be held at Nick's SPAR in Berea as a precursor to the SPAR and Daily Dispatch Fun Run.

Stapleton said: "This year we celebrate the 10th year and in that time more than 1,200 wheelchairs have been donated to previously immobile

people. We will host a Wheelchair Awareness Day at Nicks Berea on Saturday and will be linking up with the SPAR Daily Dispatch Fun Run, a wheelchair-friendly event."

The Wheelchair event, Stapleton said, would allow businesses to sponsor a wheelchair for R5,000, and 10 chairs would be donated.

"Each business sends two people to spend 67 minutes in a wheelchair and they are given various tasks to perform, like buying products in the shop from the top shelf, using the ATM and buying items through the teller as the aisles can be narrow.

"These are normal actions able-bodied people take for granted. We have started moving outside Gqeberha. We've visited Jeffreys Bay and Kirkwood before, and the idea is to hopefully go to Makhanda as well.

"We also link the concept of accessibility and awareness

with the Fun Run, as a wheelchair-friendly race," Stapleton said.

The next day, at 9am on October 16, family and friends will walk the Fun Run from the Orient pools.

The official beneficiary of the SPAR Daily Dispatch Fun Run is the Sweethearts Foundation, which donates wheelchairs to people with disabilities across the metro.

"The Sweethearts Foundation believes in leaving a more earth-friendly environment and that a wheelchair should be recognised as a basic human right, and that anyone who is in need of one should have one," co-ordinator Yvonne Pearce said.

Project Manager for APD, Stanford Slabbert, said the expansion was in partnership with the Amputee Support Group (ASG), Nkosinathi and Rehab, its sister NPO in the metro.

"For so many people, when they become disabled, they

The wheelchair event, Stapleton said, would allow businesses to sponsor a wheelchair for R5,000

think it's the end of their active life. A lot of people suffer from depression [as a result], which is why we partner with ASG, who offer counselling.

"But there is life after limb loss. This event is all about raising awareness of the daily struggle people with disabilities face."

General manager of Super-SPAR Nick's Berea, Marco Teixeira, said it was excited to host the first Wheelchair Wednesday in East London.

Teixeira said: "This is all for a very good cause and will give people insight into the daily struggles of people living with a disability. Our staff will get involved in the process as well, so

we can't wait to welcome everyone to our store.

The SuperSPAR has been expanded to allow for wheelchair-friendly shopping aisles.

"We opened up the store to make it more accessible so there is more space and flow for people to be able to manoeuvre. We also have ramps in the front and back for customers."

Visit the Daily Dispatch Fun Run page or entrytickets.net/sparfunrun to enter.

Online entries close at midnight on Monday.

Late entries may only be done during the race pack collection on Friday (October 14) at Gussie's Gifting and Stationery (98 Old Transkei Road) and a late registration fee of R20 will be added to the entry fee. A portion of this will be donated to the Sweethearts Foundation.

Race pack collection is from noon-6pm on Friday and 10am-2pm on Saturday.



GENEROUS DONATION: Spar has donated over 1,000 wheelchairs as part of its Wheelchair Wednesday event. Picture: SUPPLIED

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Nelson Mandela

The Nelson Mandela Museum is calling upon the leaders of the national liberation movements, political leadership across political persuasions, social activists, academics, researchers, students, civil society, communities to be part of a constructive dialogue on how these values of our predecessors could be reclaimed and used to build a united Africa, sustainable livelihoods, caring and peaceful society.

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