

Three Friends Plan 2,000-mile Trek across India in Tiny Auto-Rickshaw to Help Raise Funds For Charity

Harrison Ford won't be along for the ride, but three close friends from Boston and San Francisco will be undertaking their own version of Ford's famous adventure movies of the 1980s, only this time their journey is dubbed, "Raiders of the Lost Tuk."

The three friends will join 60 other teams from around the globe (and only five teams from the United States) in a 2,000-mile tuk-tuk trek across India. A tuk-tuk is short for auto-rickshaw, a common form of transportation usually meant for only short distances in and around cities in India. They will be facing the elements and the limits of their endurance all for charity, raising funds for, the *Friends of Maiti Nepal* (the U.S. extension of the Nepalese charity Maiti Nepal), and the *Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation* (JDRF).

The "Raiders of the Lost Tuk" rickshaw will include Brianna Limebrook, a Boston University alum and biotech marketing professional originally from Orange County, CA now residing in Boston, Kate DeWald, also a Boston University alum originally from upstate New York now residing in San Francisco working in software sales, and Jim Matheson out of San Jose, currently employed as a Senior Director of Marketing.

"With all the natural disasters occurring in the world today, we wanted to make a difference in the many preventable tragedies affecting people all over the world on a daily basis. For us, the Rickshaw Run is a bold and exciting way to spread awareness about causes where a difference can be made while also having the adventure of our lives," said Limebrook, who initially reached out to Matheson and DeWald about participating in the Rickshaw Run.

The Rickshaw Run occurs three times a year, in autumn, winter, and spring. The team will take off September 11, 2010 for the Autumn Rickshaw Run that will last two weeks across the entire sub-continent of India.

With no check-in points or truck with spare parts following the participants, the team is entirely on its own to plan its route, figure out where to sleep, and improvise when things don't go as planned. Not to mention, they are using the least suitable vehicle for transport. The tuk-tuk looks like a golf cart but with only three wheels. It is also not meant for long distances.

The group will start their adventure during monsoon season in the snowy Himalayan town of Gangtok, Sikkim, which is in northern India near Nepal. The team should arrive roughly two weeks later at the finish line deep in the desert of Jaisalmer, Rajasthan, aptly nicknamed "The Golden City."

The Run will pit "Raiders of the Lost Tuk" against sweaty jungle heat, dirt tracks, monsoon rains, and Himalayan peaks. With only the support of what can be kept in the team's auto-rickshaw, the grueling journey will be a test of the team's ability to keep their humor, physical stamina--and sanity.

Friends of Maiti Nepal is one of the 2 official charities of the Autumn 2010 Rickshaw Run chosen by the League of Adventurists, a U.K. based organization. Each team must raise a minimum of £1000 for one of the two official charities, which means a meaningful sum of money is pooled in order to benefit the charities' projects. The League of Adventurists is predicting they will hit their goal this year of raising £1 million for charity through the many adventures they organize each year, including the Rickshaw Run.

Friends of Maiti Nepal provides help, support, protection and rehabilitation to Nepali girls and women who are abuse victims. At present, the team has raised more money for Friends of Maiti Nepal than any of the 60 teams participating in the Autumn 2010 Rickshaw Run and already surpassed their goal of raising \$2,250 for the charity, an amount that will enable 3 girls that have been victims of sexual trafficking to live in the Maiti Nepal Child Protection Home and receive formal schooling for one year.

"It was important to us to make a difference in the world that expands beyond our Western walls. We'll be experiencing firsthand the culture and the people in a way most tourists never will, which is why it was so

important to us to support a charity that will go to support projects in many of the locales we will soon be traveling through," said Kate DeWald.

The second charity the team has chosen to particularly spend a great deal of their energy raising money for is the *Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JD RF)*. This is of special interest because team member Jim Matheson is living with Type 1 diabetes. He is one of 15 million people in the world living with type 1 diabetes, making this a truly global issue. Matheson, who was diagnosed at age 10, says, "Not only do we want to help JD RF find a cure for this disease, but I want to inspire the kids living with diabetes to realize they can do anything in the world, including a 2,000-mile drive across India!" The team has set a goal of raising a minimum of \$5,000 for the *Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation*.

Aside from the team's charity fund raising goals, they also have a tremendous amount of planning underway in terms of searching for corporate sponsors to help offset the high personal costs of the journey (such as vaccines, remote medical insurance, and airfare), physically training to prepare for the wide variety of situations they will encounter, studying Hindi and Indian culture, as well as undergoing several rounds of immunizations each to include Rabies, Japanese Encephalitis, and Typhoid vaccines, among others.

To follow the team on their journey, make a donation, or to inquire about team sponsorship please visit the team's website at LostTuk.com. The team can also be followed at facebook.com/LostTuk or twitter.com/LostTuk.

Contact:

Lauren Malone
Carpman Communications
617-338-6601
lauren@carpmancommunications.com