



Changing the lives of
Blind, Visually Impaired and Dyslexic Children



VISION CHARITY MARATHON RUNNERS STORIES

FROM THEIR EXPERIENCES AT THE 2010 VIRGIN LONDON MARATHON

Danny Rogers

I hope you all agree it was a unbelievable experience (one of the best days of my life..) but for me it started so badly as I had a nightmare right from the start..!

I pulled my calf muscle whilst warming up and stretching 5 minutes before the start) and it was so tender to touch that I almost pulled out, but I thought I couldn't do that and decided to give it a go – talk about mind-over-matter..!

I jogged the entire way and had unbelievable pain in my leg every time I put my foot down, but managed (God knows how...!) to finish in just over 5 hours, which is a disappointing time, but at least I managed to get it done and finish.

I now owe it to myself to do another one (probably Chicago) later this year – and I will let you.

Finally, I am pleased to say that I am well over target for the cash raised, so all my pain wasn't for nothing and I wish everyone at the charity best wishes and hope the collective effort has raised much needed funds.

Andrew Fleming – First of our runners to arrive at the Vision stand

This was my first Marathon and I was chuffed to do it in 3hrs 41mins - even though there were times when I thought I would never see the finish!!! I definitely agree it was an unbelievable experience - the mixture of excitement, pain, tiredness and elation were only made even more intense by the fact that we had so many people supporting us, either along the course or through their donations. I'm proud to say that I am well over target and more donations are coming in today - obviously some people doubted by ability to finish!!!

When I started training I said this was my only marathon.....now I am not so sure!!!!

Adam Blake – our youngest runner

Thanks to all the support throughout the race...

I'm 18 and it was my first marathon .. I got to 19 miles in 2hours 40 and was on for 3hours 30 which was my target... but for a water bottle (god knows which one on millions) i twisted my knee and struggled. but thanks to the support of everyone I walked and hobbled through on a day I will never forget finishing in 5 hours 3(or so). Thanks again and look forward to seeing everyone in December.. for a night our training and race deserves... a good old PINT!!!



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John Vickerage

This was my third marathon and it was the most enjoyable but also the most difficult. The last six miles were just about holding on and not walking. I was astonished at how many people were walking towards the end – it seemed more than I've ever seen before. I think the conditions were pretty tough; the warm weather made it very challenging (bearing in mind most of our training was done in the freezing cold and snow). My training was cut a little short thanks to a groin injury, which I think took the edge off my performance yesterday. Now I have my excuses in.... I managed to finish in 4 hours 13. A little slower than I would have liked as I was aiming for under four hours. It was faster than Iwan Thomas though so I was pretty pleased about that.

Well done to everyone that competed and completed the marathon. For the guys that ran while injured; fair play as this is a massive mental battle as well as a physical one. Thanks also to all the Vision supporters who turned out. It was always a boost to see them and believe me, you really need every boost you can get. Thankfully I hit my target as far as fund raising is concerned, without resorting to press-ganging my neighbours – I may still do that though....
Under 4 hours next time!!!

Andy Mason

This was my first marathon and although I have done a lot of long runs over the years, nothing compared to my experiences of yesterday. I started well and completed the first 16 miles on target, however my old knees started to show signs of fatigue and at 22 miles they decided to slowly seize up. I walked for most of the last 4 miles, but managed a final 400 meter jog to the finish line in just over 5 hours.

I had a great time and look forward to an improved time and stronger knees for 2011 :o)))

Well done to all, a number of vision runners patted me on the back as they saw me struggling in the final stages, that and the help of the wonderful crowd kept me going. One thought for 2011, I will definitely have my name on my shirt, the supporters really encourage you by name if they see it.

Laura Woods

Wow what an amazing experience! This was my first marathon and I will never forget it!!! The crowds were just fantastic. I must admit that I started to find it pretty tough by 20 miles as the warm weather did make it difficult.

I managed to cross the line in 4 hrs 16 mins. I was hoping for under 4, but I am still very pleased!
Thanks Vision!!!

Mark Errington – has raised the most so far

Well I'm 45 years young and this was my first marathon. I started my training back in September,

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then stopped for a few weeks with a calf injury. Started up again in November and got through to January (plus or minus breaks for the weather). Then in February aggravated a cartilage injury I had when I was 13. Found relief in Collagen/Glucosamine tablets and training was going well until two weeks ago when 16 miles in to a 20 mile run I sprained my other knee. I hobbled home the 4 miles (as you can't make phone calls from a standard iPod which is all I had with me). I rested up and did a couple of short runs which although sore was better than I expected. So a week before the event I did a couple of 7-8 mile runs, and in both I got about 6 miles before the pain started. I decided to do no more training at all, and got on with the task of eating pasta every day for a week, and hoping that it wasn't going to hurt too much. Only then did I notice that I had actually worn through my running shoes and that I was down to only foam padding at the heels, so had to buy a new pair with no time to break them in.

I started in group 9 and even some of the fancy dress runners were off in front of me. Some people jogged over the start line waving to the cameras and then promptly started walking. I think that I spent most of the first half of the run dodging left and right to avoid people, and at about 5.5 miles went too quickly left and my sprained knee collapsed. After a few steps the pain subsided a bit but I realised that I would not be able to go around people, and I started calculating how long it was going to take me if I had to walk for 21 miles, 20 miles, etc. So I then just concentrated on looking out for each mile marker as the pain in the knee got worse trying to get to a point where I would finish in time to get a medal on the day.

Don't ask how, because I don't know, but I managed to keep running all the way to the finish. I think the pain in the knee felt easier as by about 15 miles I could feel the effects of the new running shoes on my feet, and although not having a problem during training was having some problems with chaffing. It helped that after about 17 miles there was much more space on the road as many people were slowing up and walking, and by 23 miles I knew I was going to keep going to the end. When I saw the sign saying only 600 metres to go I was so happy that I don't think I felt any further pain until waiting for the tag to be cut off my shoe after the finish line. I finished in a little under 4:07 and I went round to catch the Vision crew at the meet and greet. Here I realised that my nipples were bleeding, but putting on the red finishers T-shirt seemed to make that feel better as well. The day after I'm feeling pretty good, and am so pleased so many people got so much out of the day.

I know that if I had been anywhere other than on that marathon course yesterday, I would have stopped running by 6 miles (and having heard from the others who suffered know that the sheer will to keep going is amazing when you are faced with it). What kept me going was the thought that I had made a commitment to those people that sponsored me to complete a marathon, and given that a large percentage of those had paid to Just-giving in advance, I didn't want to go back saying I had failed.

Catherine Chu

What an incredible day yesterday! We really couldn't have asked for better running conditions..the rain at the beginning was a bit discouraging! But it was definitely entertaining seeing 15,000 people



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trying to crowd underneath 3 trees before lining up for the race!

The adrenaline from the day and the energy from the crowd really kept me going! I was in such a zone that I didn't even realise it went I reached the 20 mile mark! The last 6.2 miles were not so pleasant I'd have to say ;o) This was my second marathon, and I felt much stronger throughout the race, even though I ran it slightly slower than my first...I finished just over 4 hrs..at 4hrs 46 seconds!

The experience was incredible..and how great to run the marathon for such a wonderful charity. Thank you Vision for giving me this unforgettable opportunity! Look forward to seeing everyone at the ball in December!

Andrew Brent

This was my first Marathon, and I started training just after xmas as i was on the reserve list. I couldn't believe the crowds and they really kept me going through the last 6 miles, I had nothing left and had to walk a couple of times. But I placed a bet with Chris and Laura for a pint of beer that I would beat them (as we met on the course) and I can proudly announce that my time was 4h 42m.... sorry Chris but looks like you owe me that beer!!!!

Chris Muir

Laura and I ran together for Vision,

It was our first marathon and what an experience it was!! It took a lot of effort to get us fit enough to run that far but we finished in 4hours 48 in the end. I had a bit of knee trouble which resulted in half of london cheering me on (i think as a result of the expression on my face)!! It was amazing to see so much support from all walks of life in London!

I'm most pleased that we beat the guy carrying a fridge on his back!!!! :-)

Thanks again Vision for giving us the chance to run in this fantastic event!! I couldn't think of a better cause to run for!!! Well done everyone and look forward to buying Andrew that beer! :-)

Darren Brooker

Sounds like everyone enjoyed it as much as I did, which is truly great to hear...though my entire lower body feels like it's made of wood today, yesterday was one of the most enjoyable experiences of my life. It was my first marathon and though I'd put in a lot of training I was still a little apprehensive of the magnitude of the task ahead of us...particularly at about 9am, when it was cold and wet. Thankfully though, the weather worked in our favour and considering the 22 degrees it could have been, the conditions yesterday were pretty ideal.

I wasn't able to run at the pace I wanted to in the first half of the marathon and by that point I'd abandoned all pacing and clockwatching (I was initially hoping for a 3:50 finish). Things only really



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opened up at mile 15, but the great thing about having ran the first half of the race slower than I'd planned was that I was able to actually up the pace and run much faster than I'd planned for about the last 10 miles. I didn't hit any kind of wall, and I think the slow start made it all the more enjoyable...that and the amazing atmosphere and incredible crowd. If I ever do another marathon (which I pretty much knew as I crossed the line I would) I'll get my name on my vest again. It really makes a massive difference, and running down the embankment yesterday was a really emotional experience that was made all the better for the amount of people cheering me on by name.

I finished in 3:52, which I was over the moon with and I'm just sad I wasn't I able to hang around that long afterwards and meet a few of my fellow runners as you came in.

Thanks everyone at Vision for your help and support...I look forward to the December gathering!

Sandy Wall

It was epic, thanks to Vision for allowing me to have a go. And thanks to the refrigerator guy, the rhino, the fireman, the tattooed ballerina and his jettes for the cheering crowds and all the other charity runners going on my pace who helped pull me through. Thanks to all the kids offering sweets and the police holding out the Vaseline. Thanks to my family and friends who kept popping up like Wally in a crowd scene. It all gave me faith in myself and the people around me and I can't wait to do it all over again...

Lizi Cole

It has been great reading all your stories today. It certainly has made my day go quicker and my aches and pains go slightly, although I am still suffering a bit! It was my first marathon this year and it was one of the most amazing days of my life! Not one I will be forgetting quickly that is for sure. I really hope to be doing it again next year!

Thinking back to the training in the snow and rain I really didn't think I could achieve it but I kept thinking of the finishing line and the medal (which now has pride of place on the wall!) The crowd were absolutely fantastic and really helped me through some times that I didn't think I would get through! Thank you to Vision for all your support. It meant so much to think that you were all behind us. I am so happy to have raised more than I expected for such a great charity and to know that we will all be helping in some way is such a great feeling.

I can't wait for the ball and to have a well earned drink!

Well done to everyone! See you all in December!

Mark Sanderson

This was my first marathon after nearly 7 months of training. The London Marathon has always been



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something I'd fancied doing – I'd even applied before but was unsuccessful in my application, so when the opportunity arose to run on behalf of Vision, it was an offer too good to refuse.

I started training, with my brother Andrew, towards the end of last summer time, when the weather was still fine. We trained through the cold winter months in the rain and the snow (I actually managed to damage my knee after slipping over in the snow) running when most sane people were either still in bed or enjoying a nice relaxing night in. But as the weeks passed and the distances increased my legs started to acclimatise (although my toe nails began to turn black!) meaning I was able to continually push myself towards my end goal – completing the London Marathon!

I found the race itself very hard, but there was no way, after nearly 7 months of training, that I was going to stop. WALKING WAS NOT AN OPTION..... Miles 14-21 proved very tough with each mile seeming to take hours, but one by one, the miles started to pass by, the crowds got louder and the end edged closer... Running down Birdcage Walk was electric with thousands of spectators cheering loudly, then after running by Buckingham Palace, the end was in sight.... I was never going to break any records with my time, my objective was to run the whole distance, which I did in 5 hours 2 minutes.

The whole experience was something I'll never forget (especially when I was overtaken by a giant teabag!) and I'd just like to thank everyone that made it possible, especially Vision Charity and my brother/training partner – Andrew.