

London VDPs and trainers raise £25K for hospital in Tanzania

Zahra Kordi joined the fund-raising walk organised by Manny Vasant

A FUND-RAISING walk in aid of the resuscitation unit for Musoma hospital in Tanzania was organised by Manny Vasant and Arrif Lalani on Friday June 30. The day started with VDPs, trainers, and advisers from the London Deanery along with other supporters met at St Mary's Church in Putney.

After some lectures by our sponsors (Natwest and MLP), Manny introduced the purpose of the walk. When he visited the Musoma Regional Hospital to plan refurbishment of the dental unit (supported by the Southern Counties BDA in March this year), he had been approached for help by a young man whose sad story was that he had lost his nine-month old baby due to lack of an oxygen machine. Julian Marcus from the Tanzania Development Trust, a registered charity in the UK, showed other projects undertaken by the trust in Tanzania and gave an assurance that 100 per cent of the money raised would be put to use in for the much needed oxygen generators.

After a light lunch, we set off to walk the six-mile route around picturesque

Putney. Each group, armed with a map and directions, set off at 1pm, by which time the sun had risen higher and the temperature was sweltering during the warmest British summer time we have experienced for a while.

The route planned started at Putney Bridge along the River Thames. After one mile the first landmark appeared – the Steve Fairburn Obelsik. By this point, those of us wearing flip-flops had wished we had a pair of comfy walking boots! The path progressed to become lined with trees providing a cool and welcome relief from the sun.

The Harrods furniture depository (now site for sought after apartments) was the next landmark. Ironically, this depository was used by our ancestors in the 19th and 20th centuries for safeguarding their furniture before they departed for the colonies such as Tanzania (Tanganyika then). We were on a different mission!

We were happy to be on the right track despite the lack of ice-cream vans! We ploughed on, eventually reaching the mid-point watering hole – The Bull's Head – to enjoy a well-earned rest and some refreshments. The world cup quarter finals (Germany v Argentina) were about to begin and so we set off on the last leg of the journey with 20 minutes to spare before the start of the match. This, however, turned into almost an hour, as we took the scenic route, but finally we found our way to the finish line pub - The Spencer Arms - where further supply of drinks and food was awaiting us courtesy of MLP. On the other hand, the football was just getting started and we all know what happened next...

Despite being a thoroughly enjoyable social event, the seriousness of the cause



The hospital in Tanzania



Some of the walkers find a shady lane



The historical landmark



Arrif with MPL staff



The participants...



...and the Nat West speakers

spurred us all on. The money raised totalled over £20,000 and that will be used to buy lifesaving equipment for a beautiful yet austere part of the world. The hospital and dental surgery serves an impoverished community lacking equipment taken for granted in a modern hospital. We hope that the money raised will go some way to improve the fortune of current and future generations.

For further information and donations please visit www.musoma.com