



MONDAY 19TH JANUARY

Join Swimathon 2009 at Kingswood Leisure Centre and be part of the world's biggest swim to raise money for Marie Curie Cancer Care

Swimathon 2009 is set to make a splash as it launches at Kingswood Leisure Centre in Bristol. As the world's largest fundraising swim, thousands of swimmers will take part in over 500 pools nationwide between 16-19 April 2009.

Swimathon entrants will be able to make a difference by taking part at Kingswood Leisure Centre and helping the lives of thousands of terminally ill patients through the donations to Marie Curie Cancer Care.

Over the past two years, 30,000 swimmers have taken part in Swimathon and have raised more than £3 million for Marie Curie Cancer Care and The Swimathon Foundation. This year, Swimathon is looking to raise more money for charity by encouraging everyone in the UK to get in the pool for the world's biggest swim and make 2009 a huge success.

The face of Swimathon 2009, Eleanor Simmonds MBE, who at Beijing 2008 became Britain's youngest ever individual gold medallist at an Olympic or Paralympic Games adds, 'Swimming is something I really enjoy and I think anybody would if they set themselves a challenge. It is a great way to keep fit and have fun with your friends – taking part in Swimathon means you can do both. I can't wait to take part.'

Duncan Goodhew MBE, Olympic gold medallist and Swimathon President, comments, 'Swimathon is a great way of raising money to help thousands of people across the UK. It's also a fantastic way to get and keep fit for all the family. Regular swimming builds endurance, muscle strength and cardio-vascular fitness and it can serve as a cross-training element to your regular workout. 30 minutes of steady paced lane swimming burns over 200 calories – well over 400 calories in an hour. So not only will Swimathon help other people but it will also help keep you fit too.'

Swimathon 2009 is open to everyone, encouraging people to set their own personal challenge by accomplishing a distance of their choice. Swimmers can challenge themselves to the ultimate 5K challenge, 2.5K for the intermediate swimmer or 1.5K for those who swim occasionally. For those interested in joining forces with friends, colleagues or family, the 5K challenge can also be completed as part of a team of up to five people.

To find out more about Swimathon or enter for the 2009 challenge go to:
www.swimathon.org

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For more information please contact, Kingswood Leisure Centre on 0300 333 0300

Notes to Editors

Swimathon

1. Swimathon will run between the 16-19 April 2009 and registration opens on 12 January 2009. Entry fee is £9 for individuals and £15 for a team with concessionary half price available for unemployed, under 16's, registered disabled and senior citizens.
2. Swimathon is now in its 23rd year and is the world's biggest swimming fundraising event. Almost half a million people have taken part and raised over £30 million for charity.
3. 70% of funds raised by participants in the 2009 national Swimathon will be used by Marie Curie Cancer Care – see (www.mariecurie.org.uk). The remaining 30% will be used by The Swimathon Foundation – see (www.swimathonfoundation.org)
4. Marie Curie Cancer Care is one of the UK's largest charities. Employing more than 2,700 nurses, doctors and other healthcare professionals, it expects to provide care to around 27,000 terminally ill patients in the community and in its hospices this year and is the largest provider of hospice beds outside the NHS. It costs £20 to provide a Marie Curie Nurse in a patient's home for one hour.
 - o Your donation will allow Marie Curie Nurses to provide more free care to patients with terminal cancer and other illnesses in their own homes. It will also help your local Marie Curie Hospice to provide expert care and a better quality of life for their patients.
 - o Marie Curie's Delivering Choice Programme aims to double the number of people with a terminal illness who have the choice to die at home.
 - o To get help from the Marie Curie Nursing Service, talk to your GP, district nurse or discharge nurse.
 - o For more information on the Marie Curie Nursing Service visit www.mariecurie.org.uk
 - o Marie Curie Cancer Care is a pioneer in end of life care research.
5. The Swimathon Foundation, a company limited by guarantee, is the independent registered charity which owns the annual national Swimathon event.
 - o The Swimathon Foundation through its trading subsidiary arranges the staging and promotion of the Swimathon event in a nationwide network of participating swimming pools, to encourage members of the public, whatever their age or ability, to understand and realise the benefits of regular swimming as a means to improve health and wellbeing and to achieve personal fitness goals.
 - o The Swimathon Foundation selects a National Charity Partner to promote itself and its charitable activities in association with the Swimathon and to receive Funds from members of the public, including those participating in the Swimathon, in support of its activities. For the 2009 Swimathon the selected Charity is Marie Curie Cancer Care.

- In addition, The Swimathon Foundation aims to support local communities in their efforts to promote the benefits of physical activity, particularly through swimming.
- For further information visit The Swimathon Foundations website at: www.swimathonfoundation.org

Eleanor Simmonds MBE

1. Eleanor Simmonds is supporting Swimathon 2009.
2. Eleanor Simmonds MBE is a British Paralympian swimmer who has achondroplasia. She swims in the S6 disability category.
3. Eleanor was the youngest British competitor at Beijing 2008 at 13 years nine months and 26 days. She won Paralympic gold medals in the 100m freestyle and in the 400 metre freestyle with a world record of 5 minutes 41.34 seconds. These achievements in Beijing also make her the youngest British person to have won a gold medal at an Olympic or Paralympic Games.
4. Eleanor won the 2008 BBC Young Sports Personality of the Year award and was awarded an MBE for Services to Disabled sport in the New Year Honours 2009. At 14 she is the youngest person to have ever been honoured.
5. Eleanor is aiming to qualify and compete at London 2012.

Duncan Goodhew MBE

1. Duncan Goodhew is the President of Swimathon and is one of the most instantly recognisable UK swimming athletes.
2. In 1978 Duncan won three Silver medals at the Commonwealth Games in Edmonton. His swimming achievements culminated in the most significant - gold in the 100 metre breaststroke in the 1980 Moscow Olympics alongside a bronze in the 4 x 100m medley. Duncan is now an author and motivational speaker.
3. Duncan was awarded an MBE for services to sport in 1981.