

TO THE TOP OF MT KILIMANJARO HELPS RAISE SH80 MILLION TO HELP KENYA'S POOR

Million dollar charity run



I THOUGHT TOBY'S RUN WAS AMAZING. HE DIDN'T DO IT TO BE THE BEST OR ANYTHING. HE DID IT TO HELP CHARITY. SO ALL THE PAIN, ALL THE HARD WORK IS TO JUST HELP OTHER PEOPLE.'

Mo Farrah, Great Britain's double European Champion.

easy but I saw straight away he had the discipline and the morale," said Said. On day two, it was 41 degrees on the thermometer and near 95 percent humidity. There was absolutely no shade as he ran exposed across the Taru desert.

Tanser recalled how he stopped to urinate and passed pure blood, almost fainting with each step.

He soldiered on, having to jump over a big black snake that blocked his path on day three, seeing a pride of lions on day four (luckily after they had eaten) and nearly stepping on a scorpion on day five.

In the evenings, he would meet friends and stay at local hotels, collapsing like a dead man on the mattress, trying to recoup for the next day's dose of kilometres.

"I was so worried that my foot was going to get a stress fracture from all the mileage, it was painful from day one and I was running the equivalent of two marathons per day.

"I could not contemplate quitting and any time the going got rough, I focused on Kenyan children I knew

had died because of inadequate healthcare.

"I said to myself 'If you had raised this money sooner and built this hospital years ago, they would have never died, so why are you complaining, you are here, alive!'"

Luckily, fate had it in store for Tanser to reach the peak, and on noon, Sunday, November 28, he touched the stars of Africa, summiting the world's highest free-standing mountain.

"I would have got up a day earlier. First, we were delayed in waiting for the park to open, and then the porters carrying our food were so far behind on the first day that we had to wait till the evening for them half way up the mountain so we could eat something.

So on the next morning, my guide, Simon Mtuy, who holds the unassisted ascent/descent record on Kilimanjaro, said: "Let's leave the porters behind, carry our own supplies and summit. We'll meet them when we descend."

And that is what happened.

All in all, Tanser was on foot, nine hours going up the mountain, and said on reaching the peak, the only emotion he felt was relief,

"To hit one million dollars was incredible. I did not even look at the view at the top, I just wanted to touch the signpost and get back to Kenya to celebrate with my friends Pieter Langerhorst and Lornah Kiplagat knowing I'd hit a million!"

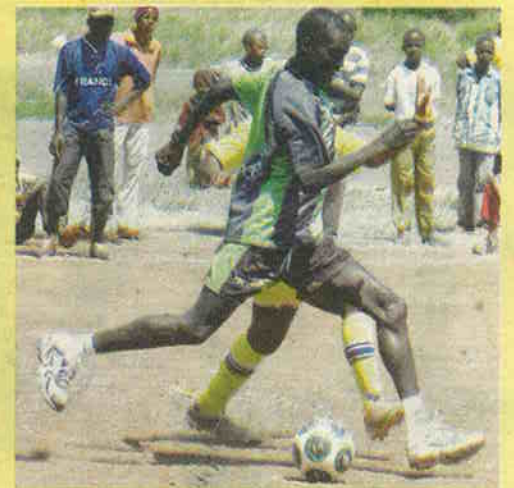
"I am still a long way from completing the hospital, the journey to raise the first million dollars is now done, and now I embark on the next leg... I can't give up, I owe it to the children of Africa," concludes Tanser, drawing a sip of Java coffee from his favorite café in Adams Arcade, Nairobi.

"Kenya is God's land, the best people I have ever found and believe you me, I have really travelled all over the world, we just need more opportunities over here, that is all.

"Just the things people in other countries take as a birth right... like kids getting basic public healthcare in their own hospital."

HOW I DID IT

Ronaldo and Webber among Tanser's sports charity sponsors



CHRIS OMOLLO | NATION

MARATHON DRIBBLE: Four times Boston Marathon champion Robert "Mwafrika" Cheruiyot dribbles past Mercy Akinyi during a celebrities' Shoe4Africa fund-raising football match against Carolina for Kibera women's team in Nairobi.

BY TOBY TANSER
toby@tanser.org

"Two years ago when I decided to build this hospital, I was sitting in (two times Boston Marathon champion) Moses Tanui's café in Eldoret, during the post-election clashes, and I had just visited the Kiambaa Church.

I had met a lady whose child was burned alive in that devastating event in what might be the blackest day in Kenyan history.

She had told me there had to be something positive and meaningful come out of this tragedy. It was then I was given the proposal for a children's hospital, that day.

And I had wanted to build a place where people came for healing and when I found out there was not a public children's hospital in Sub Saharan Africa, it became the obvious mission, almost prophetic... but, hey, I did not have a job or a large bank account, and I now I needed to find one billion Kenya shillings!

I decided to try and build a website with a virtual wall of brick donations by soliciting acquaintances to raise the required money.

I emailed seven friends planning to build a web page with one layer of bricks (with each person's name on the brick). Only two friends responded, Marty Levine and Christine Bilsky, so with myself, we now had three bricks.

I just used photoshop to stretch those bricks out and we had our foundation.

Then I emailed more friends and said 'please donate, I'll put your name on the 'wall of fame.'

My motto was 'click (your mouse) for a brick.' It took a lot of work, many, many unanswered emails and phone calls, but more and more donations flooded in.

TV drama series ER actor Anthony Edwards (Dr Mark Greene), my good friend and then the chairman of Shoe4Africa, made a most generous donation of six figures, as did a leading American film maker, who wishes to remain anonymous, spurred on by Edwards' contribution.

Actress Rosario Dawson, Natalie Portman, Ryan Reynolds, Ed Norton, Helen Hunt, soccer star and Shoe4Africa ambassador Cristiano Ronaldo, Formula one driver Mark Webber and Michael Stipe of REM have all followed suit.

Today, over 4,000 names are on that wall.

People who have sent shoes even include names like Snoop Doggy Dog, Elijah Wood, Jake Gyllenhaal, Ellen DeGeneres and Ashley Jensen.