parkrun and CHF PROVE children's heart conditions are no barrier to exercise

Wednesday 31 October, 2018

The Children's Heart Federation (CHF) and parkrun have joined forces to encourage children with heart conditions to reap the benefits of exercise in a safe way.

On Sunday 4th November families of children with heart conditions will gather at the junior parkrun at King George V Playing Fields Welwyn Garden City to cheer on their children and siblings as they run around the 2km course.

These inspiring young people will not only be showing what children with heart conditions can achieve, but will be improving their cardiovascular health which will improve their overall fitness and reduce the risk of them developing cardiovascular disease in later life.

Sunday also marks the production of the document *Guidelines for children with heart conditions participating in parkrun* which has been drawn up by CHF in conjunction with parkrun, it explains how parkrun works, how it could benefit a child with a heart condition and their family and gives guidance on what to do should a child feel unwell or tired.

"parkrun is ideal for children with heart conditions because it isn't a race, children can go at their own pace, jog or walk and can take a break if tired or breathless. As some children with heart conditions need to avoid contact sports, parkrun is a good way for them to exercise safely.

"I am delighted that we have several children with heart conditions running today with or without their families. They are showing how children with heart conditions can benefit and achieve through exercise."

Stuart Ainsworth, Outreach Ambassador (Heart Conditions) (Volunteer) parkrun UK

This initiative is part of Project PROVE which is looking to make parkrun events accessible and welcoming to those with disabilities and long-term conditions.

Supporting Project PROVE is CHF trustee Paul Willgoss, a keen marathon runner Paul was born with a complex heart condition.

"When I was a child I was excluded from most sporting activities at my school. My school was terrified my heart couldn't take the strain. An activity like parkrun would have been of great benefit to me, and I hope will be to children born with heart conditions like me.

"Exercise can help children with heart conditions manage their health as overall muscular fitness supports the heart in circulating blood to the body.

"Exercise is therefore extremely important for children with heart conditions and the ethos of parkrun allows for full participation. It's a fun and free way to build exercise into busy lives."

Paul Willgoss MBE

Further information for editors

The run is held at King George V Playing Fields, Welwyn Garden City AL7 4BP and commences at 9.00 am.

Press planning on attending or for further information or photographs contact:

Email Joanna Heath joannah@chfed.org.uk or phone 07946 019876

Attachments

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About the Children's Heart Federation

CHF is the leading UK children's heart charity and works with individuals and organizations concerned with children and young people with health and educational needs due to acquired or congenital heart conditions.

Further information

CHF was registered with the Charity Commission in 1988 and is administered and managed by a board of trustees.

www.chfed.org.uk

About parkrun

parkruns are free, weekly, timed events across the world, organised by local volunteers. Everyone is welcome at parkrun - whether you walk, jog, run or volunteer.

www.parkrun.com

Project PROVE aims to make parkrun events accessible and welcoming to those with disabilities and long-term conditions and to identify what changes if any are necessary to accommodate different groups.

A number of volunteer Champions have been recruited from within the parkrun family to work with various communities including: Heart Conditions, Endometriosis, Asthma, Blood Pressure, Diabetes, Dementia, learning difficulties and Obesity.

For further information please contact Stuart Ainsworth (stuart.ainsworth@parkrun.com) Project PROVE Outreach Ambassador for people with Heart Conditions.

Company Contact: