Taking on a challenge for Essex & Herts Air Ambulance

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This October supporters of Essex & Herts Air Ambulance will be heading to the Great Wall of China to raise money for their local life-saving Charity. The Charity's Walk the Great Wall trek, which take place from 12th to 20th October 2019 will see participants complete five days of awe-inspiring trekking along one of the new wonders of the world.

Linda Gallagher from **Basildon** has a very personal reason for taking part - her late husband Ricci was airlifted after suffering serious head injuries in 2015.

"The care and attention he received from the Air Ambulance was truly amazing. They tried so hard to save him. Words can't express my appreciation, so the only way to repay them is to do all I can to help them continue their amazing work."

Linda's fundraising for the Charity has seen her raise £6,800 by taking part in previous treks to Tanzania and Mont Blanc and she hopes to reach a total of £10,000 with her fundraising for the Walk the Great Wall trek.

As well as walking along this historic and world-famous landmark, the trekkers will have an opportunity to help repair a section of the Great Wall and experience the fascinating culture of China.

Linda is keen to see what the Great Wall has to offer: "I'm looking forward to Walk the Great Wall as it will give me a chance to see one of the Wonders of the World and also raise money for this amazing charity."

"I have many fantastic memories from Tanzania, but probably the sight of a wild elephant strolling across the road in front of our jeep was the most surreal thing I've ever seen. It was also amazing being so close to the Masai people, who were so friendly.

"If anyone is thinking about trekking, I would definitely say `go for it'! The support you get from day one from EHAAT, the trek company and other trekkers makes it a life-changing experience making lifelong friends and being part of a team who all have the same fundraising goal.

"I am totally humbled by the people I have met since starting on this journey and have met some amazing inspiring people on the treks that have made it a must that I carry on."

The care that my late husband received from the Air Ambulance gave me those last few treasured moments with him. I'm doing this so that that someone's life can be saved or that their family gets to spend a little more time with them.

"I never thought I would ever need them, but they are always there for you whenever and wherever, no questions."

Maaike Simpson from **Rickmansworth** signed up as soon as she heard about the trek.

She explains, "In the last year I've seen EHAAT attending several incidents on the M25 near me, and on one occasion the helicopter landed outside my house. They save lives and do it amazingly well."

Two of Maaike's family have been assisted by other air ambulances.

"My son was airlifted by an air ambulance in the mid-eighties after an accident on the M25 and I am extraordinarily grateful for that.

"More recently, my grandson's girlfriend fell off a cliff in Cornwall and broke both her legs. She too was airlifted by an air ambulance."

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Having visited China before, Maaike says she is keen to return: “Walking the Great Wall is on my `bucket list’. I’ve been there twice before, but only done the touristy bit, so I want to do it properly this time!”

Maaike’s travels have taken her around the world, and despite having entered her eighth decade, she is keen to carry on.

“Age is just a number, and I think I am looking good for my age!”

Two years ago Maaike was one of the EHAAT trekkers who visited Tanzania.

“It was something I had always wanted to do, and I absolutely loved it. We were walking with the Masai, and we were with the most wonderful guides. Every time I do something like this I feel have learned something new. They could sense the animals around us. I’m looking forward to acquiring some new memories on the trek.”

Sabi Stafford, Essex Fundraising Manager at EHAAT said: “We are delighted that Linda and Maaike will be joining us again on this trek. If you would like to take on a challenge that will see you make new friends, collect memories that will last a lifetime and give you the satisfaction of helping an amazing cause we would love to hear from you.”

“A minimum fundraising target of £3,300 is required to take part in the trek, and we have plenty of ideas and advice to help you reach your target. You can register at ehaat.org/trek2019/ for £299.

For more information or to receive an information pack, contact the EHAAT Fundraising Team on trek@ehaat.org or by calling 0345 2417 690.

-ENDS-

Photograph: Linda Gallagher

For more information please contact Gavin Sherriff, PR Officer, on 0345 2417 690.

Notes to Editor:

Essex & Herts Air Ambulance (EHAAT) is a Charity that provides a Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) for the critically ill and injured of Essex, Hertfordshire and surrounding areas.

The service is provided free of charge but, unlike NHS emergency services, the Charity receives no direct funding from the Government or National Lottery. It costs in excess of £500,000 every month to keep the service operational and saving lives, and this would not be possible without the generosity and goodwill of people and businesses of Essex, Hertfordshire and beyond.

Each of the Charity’s HEMS teams consist of a Pilot, a Co-pilot, a Pre-hospital Care Doctor and a Critical Care Paramedic.

These teams, made up of highly-skilled individuals, tended to 1505 patients in 2017/18 and are the backbone of your local life-saving Charity.

The fleet, consisting of two Air Ambulances, and four Rapid Response Vehicles (RRVs - cars) operates seven days a week from 7am to 9pm. After sunset, the Critical Care Team continues to provide the service using Rapid Response Vehicles.

In addition, a Rapid Response Vehicle is operational on a Friday and Saturday evening from 6pm until 2am with a Pre-hospital Care Doctor and Critical Care Paramedic.

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