



spotlight on health

Racing To Raise Hope

(NAPSA)—What do a 46-year-old man with one leg, a woman who has undergone seven surgeries and a 51-year-old-father of six have in common?

They're all ordinary people who've run on a special marathon team that goes the extra mile in spreading awareness and raising research dollars for a common genetic disorder—neurofibromatosis.

Despite its prevalence in the population, public awareness of neurofibromatosis (NF) is still relatively low. NF is a common genetic disorder that causes tumors to grow on the nerves on or in the body and can lead to developmental delays and learning disabilities. NF affects one in 4,000 people and is more prevalent than Cystic Fibrosis, Huntington's Disease and Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy combined.

The National Neurofibromatosis Foundation began its NF Marathon Team just over two years ago, and now boasts more than 400 people running in marathons all over the world. Over the coming months, races will be held in such cities as Maui, San Diego, Anchorage and Vancouver, British Columbia.

Marathons are increasing in popularity across the country as people realize that you don't have to be a world-class athlete to accomplish this life-changing goal. Running or walking a marathon for charity is also a great way to get in shape, stay motivated and help raise awareness for a cause that is important to you.

At first, the NF Marathon

Future Marathons

- September 2, 2001—Rock n' Roll 1/2 Marathon, Virginia Beach, VA
- September 30, 2001—Portland, OR Marathon
- October 7, 2001—Chicago Marathon
- October 14, 2001—St. Louis Marathon
- October 29, 2001—Dublin, Ireland Marathon
- November 11, 2001—Long Beach, CA Marathon
- November 25, 2001—Seattle, WA Marathon
- December 9, 2001—Honolulu, HI Marathon
- January 6, 2002—Disney World Marathon, Orlando, FL
- February 2, 2002—Myrtle Beach, SC Marathon
- April 13, 2002—London, UK Marathon



Team was made up of people with NF or parents of children who have the condition. As word spread, people who had never even heard of NF, joined the cause.

Two women who live hundreds of miles apart, for example, not only joined the team, but also devised a system of "cyber training" via the Internet in order to prepare and raise funds online. Catherine "Cat" Rigby and Adrith Bicchieri created a Web site where they kept a training log, provided tips for marathon training and devised a mechanism for supporters to donate to the cause online.

Cat and Adrith not only completed their first marathon successfully in January 2001, but were so overwhelmed by the support and generosity they witnessed throughout this experience that they are getting ready for next year.

For more information about the NF Marathon Team, call 1-877-NFRACES or visit www.nf.org.