

Virgin London Marathon 2019

(Stuart Atkiss – Trustee & Fundraising Coordinator)

28th April 2019 what a day that was.....

After waking up at 2am with the noise of the road sweepers coming past the hotel and then the crowd barriers being dropped off around 5am, I was laying there thinking “nope...I'm not staying in this hotel again!!!”

But I was up at 5.45am getting ready for the big day. We needed to get out of the hotel and near the start as all the roads would be closed at 7am. We were outside waiting for the taxi when the driver calls me shouting “WHERE ARE YOU? IF YOUR NOT HERE IN 2 MINUTES IM GOING!!.... I remained calm saying “We are outside the hotel where are you?”, To have him shout again, “well you're not as I'm outside”....It turned out he was at the wrong hotel!! So, 6.55am he turns up and apologises, he then takes us to the train station 500 yards away! Why did he take us here? I needed to get to the top of Maize Hill for the marathon. The driver had been given completely wrong job.... Luckily he took us to where we needed to get to....GREAT START TO THE DAY!!

That was just the start to an amazing day!! Myself, my son Taylor and my parents walked through the park to the entrance where the runners only were and had a few pictures. I went through the runners only section to then have 2 hours before the marathon started. I was now in full costume and within 10 minutes I was stopped by other runners wanting their photo taken with me (the Giraffe). It was like that for a while, now I know what it's like to be a celebrity!



Whilst walking around drinking fluids and eating bananas, I spotted the band stand and thought “that's where the BBC will be!” So, I headed straight over there, just in time to go live on BBC 2 I never got interviewed but I got on the TV.

It was 9.40am, we were being told to head to our pens to get ready to run, so off I went to Pen 3! We were just waiting for the slow runners, like Mo Farah, to have a head start on us!!

10.38am and we were off! This was it now, making our way through the 26.2mile course. The supporters cheering everyone on all the way through London was amazing, and with the outfit on I was seeming to get most of the cheers! I was taking it all in and giving high fives to the those cheering us on! The kids were all shouting “a giraffe, wow!”, and so were the adults! It was amazing! I had runners alongside me taking selfies too.

There was one part of the marathon I did not enjoy, which was when I got to the Cutty Sark, where I knew Taylor and my parents were. But I could not find them, only to be told later I looked right at them.

All the training I had put in to make this day a good day all came to an end, as I came around the corner on to the Mall and to cross that line and to get that Medal around my neck. I finished with a time of 4:49:26, which was 8 minutes quicker than when I ran the marathon in 2011.

I just want to say thank you to the ED Society for giving me this opportunity.

Supporting a normal lifestyle

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