

## **Local Duo Take On Epic Run Across The Middle East** Click to support the project at [www.justgiving.com/tlu165](http://www.justgiving.com/tlu165)

British Ultra Marathon veterans Jackson Griffith (37) & John Tyszkiewicz (47) are facing the challenge of a lifetime with a self managed attempt at the first ever non-stop run across Lebanon in the Middle East. The duo resides in Essex (Epping and Saffron Walden respectively) but has travelled extensively together in recent years in the pursuit of extreme running challenges in different parts of the world.

This latest project however will be their most daring yet with Jackson and John planning to run non-stop from the Lebanese border with Syria in the north to the border with Israel in the south, travelling over roads, trails and mountain tracks for more than 165 miles and for an estimated 40 hours. The event starts on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> April.

Their goals are twofold ; firstly, to bring public awareness and support to the wonderful work of the **SOS Children's Villages**, the world's largest orphaned & abandoned children's charity that has a strong presence in the region.

Secondly, the complex logistics of the venture will be provided by the **Beirut Marathon Association** and the event will uphold their mission, to inspire and motivate, to promote unity and achievement through experience of collective challenge, for the benefit of now and for generations to come.

"We were fortunate to visit one of the SOS Children's Villages in Lebanon during a recent trip to Beirut and were truly inspired by the unending commitment and dedication to their cause," says Jackson. "We may be running for 40 hours but for surrogate mothers at the SOS Children's Villages, it's the commitment of a lifetime."

Jackson and John are no strangers to extreme environments having competed in 100mile + races in such destinations as the frozen wilds of Alaska, the scorched deserts of the Sahara and the mountainous trails of Greece. But this challenge will go one step further yet, as John explains.

"We plan to spend 40 hours on the move over a distance of 165 miles, that's more than we've ever attempted before. The sheer physical and psychological stress is going to be immense, sleep deprivation will be a real problem and we expect major trauma to our feet along the way."

Along with logistical support from the Beirut Marathon Association, Jackson and John will also be joined for short stretches on the route by the British Ambassador to Lebanon and the Lebanese Minister for Youth & Sport. As a result media interest is expected to be high and local organisations are embracing the project with great enthusiasm.

You can support Jackson and John by visiting their online fundraising page at [www.justgiving.com/tlu165](http://www.justgiving.com/tlu165) and follow their progress through the project's website at <http://www.beirutmarathon.org/transleb.php>.

Where supporters are UK taxpayers, the SOS Children's Villages charity will automatically receive 28% extra in Gift Aid on donations, which makes Justgiving a highly efficient way of sponsoring them.

## ***Notes to Editors***

For further information or to arrange a photo call please contact Jackson on 07789 932829 or John on 07811 262961.

For further information and photos on SOS Children's Villages please contact Caroline Baker on 01223 365589 or refer to information below ;



### **About SOS Children's Villages**

For nearly 60 years, SOS Children has built communities around the world for children who have no one to turn to. By providing a home and a new mother in a purpose-built local Village, thousands of orphaned and abandoned children have been given a loving and secure family for life.

SOS Children also plays an important role in supporting the development of local communities by building and running nursery, primary and secondary schools; vocational training centres and medical centres, all of which are open to the children in our care and to those from the wider community. Where possible, we want to prevent child abandonment, so we offer skills, training, education, counselling and micro-loans to vulnerable families so can they can provide for their children in the long-term. SOS Children also provides emergency relief in situations of crisis and disaster.

Today, we care for more than 70,000 children in 475 unique SOS Children's Villages in 123 countries worldwide, and also support a further one million children and families in local communities.

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