

A RaceRunning club for East London

What is RaceRunning?

RaceRunning is a new sport for children, young people and adults that cannot run independently, and rely on support aids for mobility and balance. The RaceRunner is a three-wheeled frame which supports the athlete's body, enabling the athlete to propel the frame with their feet and steer using their hands. RaceRunning can be done just for fun and fitness, but it's also a competition sport, and there are plans afoot to get it included in the Paralympic Games in 2024.

What do we want to do, and why?

We have a vision to buy five RaceRunners in different sizes, and set up a weekly RaceRunning club in East London for children and young people with disabilities. This would give them:

- Cardiovascular exercise – which can be very difficult to access for children with complex disabilities such as cerebral palsy
- Social interaction with other children and young people with additional needs
- Fresh air – the club would take place at an outdoor athletics track
- Fun!

To see whether there is the demand for such a club, we organised a RaceRunning taster session on 7th May at the Waltham Forest Feel Good Centre in Walthamstow. Ten children and young people between the ages of 4 and 16 came along and ran around the athletics track alongside their siblings.

Testimonials from children and parents following the taster session

Here is what some of the young people and their parents had to say about the experience:



"I definitely want to go back again. I enjoyed it and it was nice to see other children who use wheelchairs like me."

Mia, aged 10½, pictured left

"We enjoyed the session too - a friendly and welcoming atmosphere. Everyone was so supportive, patient and understanding. We really hope you get sufficient funding to run this as it will be so beneficial for the children to be able to take part in sport."

"As parents, we are often told by physiotherapists and occupational therapists to get our children to do relevant activities to help with coordination, muscle strength etc but it is almost impossible as the facilities are almost non-existent, or impractical. We certainly would support and attend race running with Mia at Waltham Forest Athletics Club."

Maxine and Nick, Mia's Mum and Dad

"It was a very different activity to anything we have tried before and Matt loved it. Matt is a sport-obsessed 9 year old who also has cerebral palsy. This largely affects his legs and as such he uses a wheelchair, walking frame and sticks.

The running frames offer the chance to run freely. It sounds daft but it is not something Matt has ever had the chance to do. He loved the track, being with other children and competing against himself.

I know these frames are very expensive but they offer much more than a way of running. The confidence and camaraderie the children will gain will be immeasurable. If we can get a running club going we will definitely use and support it.

My son has big dreams and plans for himself so who knows where these bikes will take him!"

Lisa, Mum to Matt, aged 9 (pictured right)



"I loved it, it was fun, I want to go back and do it again."

Champ, aged 16, pictured left

"It's taken nearly 17 years but we have finally seen our son run without falling over, and may we add 400 metres. It was one of the proudest, most memorable times of our lives."

Sarah and Mark, Champ's Mum and Dad

"I can now run fast and take part in school sports".

Aish, aged 7

"I never thought that my daughter would be able to run. It helps her breathing, improves her core muscle strength and boosts her confidence. I have been looking to get her joining a sport which she will be able to do with little help. RaceRunning gives her that independence. "

Debs, Aish's Mum



“The RaceRunner trial was fantastic. Prior to coming Eesa was really excited, all he wanted to do was ‘race’. We as parents loved seeing the smile on his face and how much he enjoyed it. It would be fantastic if it was something he could do more regularly. Equipment is often expensive and bulky so unfortunately we can’t always afford such items and store them. This would be a wonderful opportunity for him to use the RaceRunners as well as making friends and socialising with them. “

Asma, Mum of Eesa, aged 5, pictured below



“The taster session was amazing for both the family and Amar. He had so much fun and really enjoyed taking part in his first sporting activity and bike trial. We really hope you can set this up soon so Amar can join.”

Mum of Amar, aged 9, pictured above



Amar and Eesa racing around the athletics track

Who's behind the idea?

The idea is the brainchild of Ellie Barton, a paediatric physiotherapist based in Leytonstone who specialises in working with children with complex needs. You can find out more about Ellie on her blog: childrensphysioblogger.com

We are very grateful for the support and expertise of:

- [CP Sport](#), which is pioneering RaceRunning in the UK
- [Quest88](#), which supplies the RaceRunners and loaned us five of them for our taster session
- [Access Sport](#), which runs the Waltham Forest Wolves Athletics Club which hosted our taster session, and are keen to work with us to offer RaceRunning on a weekly basis

Hayley Barton, Programme Leader at Access Sport said:

“Access Sport is a UK based sports charity which believes every child and young person should be able to access, experience and enjoy the power of sport to enhance their life prospects. We are delighted to be working in partnership Ellie to support the development of RaceRunning and meet the needs of those athletes who cannot run without assistance.

At the taster day, it was fantastic to see so many young people eager to try out RaceRunning. In such a short space of time, they all made great progress and some really were flying round the track! It would be fantastic to see those young people have regular access to RaceRunners and reap the physical and mental benefits from participating in physical activity”.

How much funding do we need?

Access Sport already provides a qualified coach for the weekly Waltham Forest Wolves athletics sessions, so we only need to cover the costs of the RaceRunners themselves in order to make RaceRunning accessible to children and young people in East London and beyond. Each RaceRunner costs in the region of £2,000, and we are hoping to raise between £6,000 and £10,000 so that we can buy three to five RaceRunners to be used at the club.

Get in touch

If you can help us with fundraising, or would like to find out more, please contact:

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