

News

Helping out families of deportees



FUNDRAISER: From left, Neasha Clarke, Jacky Rappoport and Letitia Gyamfi, from Diaspora Support Network

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A COMMUNITY group that supports families of prisoners awaiting deportation is holding a fundraiser.

The Diaspora Support Network runs a drop-in service at Carnegie Library in Hill Rise, Herne Hill, offering information to people affected when someone close to them commits an offence and is a waiting deportation.

Sessions are held on the last Friday of every month from noon to 3pm.

The group will be holding a fundraising day from 9.30am to 6pm in Windrush Square on June 4.

The event will feature information stalls, food, live performances and cooking demonstrations by Brixton's own Reggae Reggae Sauce man Levi Roots.

Founder Neasha Clarke said: "We work with an unpopular client group and their families and friends can find it difficult or embarrassing to get support and information.

"Lambeth and Southwark have a high proportion of children whose fathers are awaiting or have been deported.

"We're not defending the crimes people have committed, but we offer families advice on how to keep their children in touch with their deported fathers."

The team of volunteers also run weekly workshops with Jamaican and Nigerian men in prisons consisting of resettlement advice and helps link them to education and training and support groups available in their native countries.

'An oarsome challenge'



ON BOARD: From left, James Kayll, Tom Kelly, Edward Wells and Ollie Wells

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FRIENDS of a soldier killed in Afghanistan are preparing to row across the Indian Ocean to raise money in his name.

Brothers Edward and Ollie Wells, 30 and 28, Tom Kelly, 28, and James Kayll, 28 who attended Oxford Brookes University with the late Lieutenant Mark Evison, are preparing to row out of Geraldton, Western Australia, on Sunday, April 17.

They hope to raise £100,000 by rowing 3,100 nautical miles (3,567 miles) from Geraldton to Mauritius in under 68 days, 19 hours and 40 minutes, the current record.

Mark, who lived in Dulwich, was fatally wounded by a single bullet in his shoulder during an

early patrol and ambush. He commanded his men back to safety, and lost consciousness from bleeding within an hour. He never regained consciousness.

Edward, from Cambridge, said: "Mark was very close to the whole crew.

"We hope to raise £100,000 for all four charities that we are supporting.

"On the journey we will also be gathering data on climate change and psychometric tests to see how the trip affects us all.

"The Atlantic Ocean has been rowed by nearly 300 boats, the Indian Ocean just 11. It has very unpredictable waters and weather patterns."

"We have an enormous number

of variables to overcome. Mark would have liked to do it. He would have been a great person to have on board."

The men will be rowing and sleeping in two four-hour shifts, surviving on just 600kg of food rations.

Edward said: "Chocolate and sweets will be good for morale but we've had to be careful with the food we choose.

"When rowing we'll need a lot of calories to be able to keep going. But with no fridge, we won't have any fruit, veg or meat for the whole journey."

The Mark Evison Foundation was set up shortly after Lt Evison's death in May 2009. It provides funds for activities contributing to physical,



KILLED: Lt Mark Evison

personal and mental development awards for the specific efforts at schools.

Television presenter Ben Fogle, who competed in the Atlantic Rowing Race with Olympic rower James Cracknell, said:

"The Indian Ocean is a very big ocean for a very small boat. "It's an awesome challenge."

To find out more about the challenge and to donate money, visit www.indianocean3100.com

School meals 'inspire pupils to eat junk food'

RESEARCH REPORT BLASTS 'INSIPID-TASTING' DINNERS