

Victoria Morris's Challenge for Mental Health Awareness Week

Mental Health Awareness Week will take place from 18th-24th May 2020.

As you may already be aware, Victoria has been raising money for **Mental Health Research UK** for the past few years. Mental Health Awareness Week seemed like a good opportunity to come up with a new challenge.

In light of the current situation regarding the corona virus, she has decided to share monies raised with **NHS Charities Together**.

<https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fundraiser-display/showROFundraiserPage?userUrl=mappamorris&pageUrl=3>

During Mental Health Awareness Week 2020, **Victoria is going to challenge herself to climb the North Face of the Eiger ...**



Up the rope ... in through the window ... down the stairs ... up the rope ... and so on ...

She will climb the North Face of Mayfield Cottage, using a prusik knot to ascend a fixed rope. If she can repeat this 492 times it will be equivalent to the height of the North Face of the Eiger: 5,900 feet.

You can watch a video of her first ascent [here](#).

Money raised will be split equally between **Mental Health Research UK**, and [NHS Charities Together](#).

She has been fundraising for Mental Health Research UK (MHRUK) since 2017, in memory of Martin Sutherland, who sadly took his own life in 2011. Martin was a wonderful caring person, and a hugely talented musician, and is greatly missed by everyone who knew him. I've known Martin and his family since my early teens, and wanted to help support MHRUK as they have also done since Martin's death.

While there are many charities which support people experiencing mental health difficulties, MHRUK is unique in that it funds research into the causes and cures of mental illnesses. Many of the medication options available for mental health conditions have horrific side-effects, and much more work could – and should - be done to improve the treatment options available; people with mental ill-health deserve the same standard of care as people with physical ill-health.

Whilst the current situation regarding the Coronavirus pandemic has led to a variety of challenges for us all, I know that many people's mental health in particular will be suffering. Mental Health Awareness Week under 'lockdown' seemed like the ideal time for me to do some fundraising for MHRUK and to also support NHS Charities Together. I wanted to come up with a challenge which would be something that I would never have dreamed of doing had COVID-19 not come along to disrupt ordinary life, and that at the same time would hopefully make people smile – maybe even help improve their mental health during these uncertain times.



My husband and I are both keen mountaineers, and spend as many days out in the hills and mountains as we possibly can. Opportunities for mountaineering having been somewhat limited recently due to the lockdown, I began contemplating climbing up the outside of our house! The obvious route was up the north-facing wall, which led to my idea: to climb the equivalent of the North Face of the Eiger, on the North Face of our home, Mayfield Cottage. I'm not a great rock climber, so decided to use a technique called 'prusiking' (think abseiling, but backwards!) to ascend a fixed rope. I needed to do 492 ascents of my house to climb the equivalent of the height of the North Face of the Eiger: 5,900 feet.

As an additional challenge, for every £1,000 raised, I decided to sleep on a home-made porta-ledge, which effectively means me being strapped to the wall of the house! I'm writing this having spent one night on the porta-ledge so far. With £2,600 raised so far, I'm desperately hoping that the total doesn't go over £3,000 before Friday and consign me to a third night outside! ;-)

At this point I should add a note of caution: I know what I'm doing with ropes and knots; this is not something that you should attempt yourself unless you're already a confident climber or mountaineer.

With 320 of my 492 ascents complete, my prusiking technique is definitely improving, and I'm learning how to climb more efficiently by keeping my body streamlined with the rope. The climb has also led to some interesting conversations with the neighbours, when they look up and see someone struggling to get in through an upstairs window!



Martin's parents, Ann and Andrew, described my challenge as "completely bonkers and totally wonderful ... in fact, right up Martin's street!" For some reason, "bonkers" is a word that has come up in many people's comments. But for me, the "bonkers" element is what I hope will make other people smile, and that's where the personal reward lies in this escapade. If anyone would like to sponsor me, they can find out more about my challenge and watch some videos of me in action here:

[https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fundraiser-
display/showROFundraiserPage?userUrl=](https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fundraiser-display/showROFundraiserPage?userUrl=)