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“Wild card” charity sports training organization debuts in North Texas

DALLAS, TX – Dec. 5, 2008 – For years, many non-profit organizations have offered training programs that professionally coach individuals to complete an endurance event like a triathlon, marathon or century bike ride.

In exchange, the charities ask program participants to utilize the personal fitness challenge as a means to solicit tax-deductible contributions from friends, family, co-workers and others. People often happily contribute if someone they know is taking on a personal challenge for a good cause.

In these charity sports training programs, usually a minimum fundraising goal is set so that the costs of training and sending program participants to the endurance event’s location fall within acceptable cost-of-fundraising percentages.

Ten years ago, Dallas resident Randall White signed up to train for a charity marathon training program sponsored by the American Diabetes Association. It was a way to lose weight and pay tribute to friends and family battling diabetes. He raised \$11,000 for diabetes research and traveled to England where he completed the London Marathon.

Last spring, the 55-year-old gave it another go and participated in the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society’s Team in Training program. He raised \$12,000 in honor of loved ones, lost the weight he had put back on since London, and completed his first Olympic-distance triathlon ... in Maui.

That’s when the former non-profit executive began running the numbers. In its 20 years, the Leukemia Society’s Team in Training program has trained more than 300,000 individuals to complete endurance events, raising \$600 million in the process.

“Why should blood cancer corner the market on such highly-motivated individuals?” White wondered.

Dallas triathlete Claire Oliver lost her beloved stepfather, Tom Hillary, to blood cancer. That loss fueled her participation in the Team in Training program, including five years as one of its coaches. In addition to personally raising nearly \$100,000 for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, Oliver has also trained hundreds of novices and accomplished athletes to complete marathons and triathlons.

One of those novices Oliver trained last spring was Randall White.

“After the Maui triathlon, he approached me with an idea,” Oliver recalls.

“He wanted to explore the prospect of creating a new sports training organization for people who might

not feel a connection with a blood-related cancer. His idea was to expand the fitness and philanthropy model, helping individuals achieve a fitness goal while allowing funds raised to go to whatever charity the fundraiser wanted," the Ironman finisher notes.

"I loved the idea right away."

All Tri was born.

Based in Dallas, All Tri will train any individual to complete a triathlon and, in turn, they will raise money for the charity of their choice.

"Literacy, global warming, AIDS, breast cancer, the arts ... you name it," White adds. "Your beneficiary is a wild card."

Claire Oliver will be All Tri's coach and is on the volunteer-powered organization's founding board of directors. White serves as its chairman.

In the weeks ahead, All Tri will recruit participants for its inaugural triathlon training group. Starting February 15, first-timers and experienced athletes alike will start fundraising for the charities of their choice as they train for triathlons in Austin on Memorial Day or outside Seattle in June.

Individuals interested in participating can sign up to receive additional information at the All Tri Web, www.alltri.org.

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