

Opticiënen rent Schotse berg op en af voor zigeuners

HAARLEM - De Haarlemse opticien Paul Luyf heeft met succes zijn hardloop-klauterpartij tegen de Schotse berg Ben Nevis volbracht. Hij rende afgelopen weekeinde in 2 uur en 47 minuten op en af de 1.343 meter hoge berg en zamelde daarmee geld in voor het leven van een straatarme zigeunerfamilie in Albanië.

Luyf bedwong de heuvel voor de derde keer. Luyf baarde al eerder opzien met zijn ontwikkelingswerk in Albanië, dat hij 46 keer heeft bezocht sinds hij in 1991 zijn kwaliteiten als opticien te gebruiken om in zijn vrije tijd de armsten in dit economisch zeer zwakke land de helpende hand te bieden. Hij reist naar de

hoofdstad Tirana en trekt van daaruit het land in, waar hij de ogen meet van de armen voor wie de oogzorg onbereikbaar is. In Haarlem slijpt hij vervolgens eigenhandig de glazen, koopt voor een gereduceerde prijs bij de groothandel monturen in en reist vervolgens weer terug naar Albanië om de bril perfect pas-

send te maken voor zijn mensen. Dit keer nam Luyf deel aan de zwaarste bergloop in Groot-Brittannië: een race naar de top van de uiterst moeilijk begaanbare Ben Nevis.

Hij legde 21 kilometer af en hoopt met het ingezamelde geld een Roma-zigeunergezin een dak boven het hoofd te bieden.

Double Dutch courage for the Ben Nevis Race

TWO runners from Holland – Europe's flattest country – are in the line-up for the Ben Nevis Race on Saturday, September 4.

But, make no mistake about it, Paul Luyf and Anton Brugman have qualified to take part in this, the toughest of mountain races.

Paul's story, however, is a salutary one. An optician from Haarlem, he has dedicated most of his free time to help poor people in Albania who are visually impaired.

Indeed, last year, in recognition of this, he was made a 'Knight of the Order of Oranje Nassau' – equivalent to the British MBE.

And last year, thanks to his campaigning for the poorly-sighted Albanians, he reached the finals of the Hero 2003 competition on Dutch TV.

Paul's prize – selected by himself – was "a return ticket to Glasgow and a start-certificate in the Ben Nevis Race". All his life Paul dreamed of "conquering this 1343 metres

mountain in 3 hours 15 minutes".

Now his dream is being realised, he is turning his participation into a charity run for his Albanian project.

His running mate, and best friend, Anton, has five marathons under his athletics vest, and will be giving Paul moral support in the Ben.

"We are serious in training," said Paul earlier this summer.

"We shall be preparing for the big day on Saturday, the Fourth of September."

POVERTY IN MIND FOR BEN RACE RUNNER

UP to 500 runners are preparing to tackle Britain's highest mountain on Saturday in the annual Ben Nevis Race – once described as “the world's toughest”.

And, for the first time, the gruelling race will be filmed by the BBC, whose popular Adventure Show team will capture the thrills and spills as runners from all over the UK, and abroad, take on the

4,406ft Ben. At least six cameras will be located at various stages, including the summit.

Eighty runners attached to Lochaber Athletic Club are registered for the race which begins from Claggan Park at 2pm. Newcomers number 130, representing 26 per cent of the entry. One athlete making a return for the third time is Dutch optician and aid

By Stuart Taylor

worker Paul Luyf, who will be running to raise money for an Albanian family who live in a stable with no electricity, running water or furniture.

Mr Luyf, whose work was featured in the *Lochaber News* two years ago, contacted the paper again

this week. He said: “My thoughts went ‘running’. Normally I never get involved in this kind of aid but here, for once in my life, I had to make an exception.

“My Albanian translator and I have never seen such poverty. I told myself: this should not and cannot be. I must do something about it. This family deserves a decent existence which is natural –

just like good eyesight. Next time I meet this family I want to realise a real house with the basic facilities at comparatively low costs. So, as you can see, my participation for the third time to the fantastic Ben Nevis race which I hope to complete within the three hours and 15 minutes has an aim – a house for this very poor Romany-Gipsy family.”

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Paul Luyf bestormt berg Ben Nevis

HAARLEM - Zaterdag 2 september was het zover, de Ben Nevis Run in Schotland. Paul Luyf van Luyf Optiek in Haarlem, verscheen aan de start om geld bij elkaar te lopen voor een arm zigeuner gezin in Albanië. Bij veel wind en regen werd het startsein gegeven. Het pad was ongeplaveid, over grote keien, door ondiepe water vallen en veel modder en dichte mist. Paul: "In 1 uur 40 bereikte ik de top van de Ben Nevis. Mijn gedachten waren bij de Roma familie waarvoor ik graag een huis wil realiseren en dat gaf mij vleugels om binnen de 2 uur op de top te zijn, want anders word je teruggestuurd!" Op de top was het verschrikkelijk koud met wind en hierna volgende de gevaarlijke afdaling. Paul volbracht de race in 2 uur en 47 minuten. ●