

ECHO's London and Brighton Marathon Runners 2019!

We are absolutely delighted to introduce some of our 2019 marathon runners, giving it their all and pounding the pavement in aid of children with heart conditions and their families.

The London and Brighton Marathons are a great opportunity for our supporters to raise money for ECHO, for which we are really grateful - we receive no government or NHS funding to carry out our work, and rely entirely on donations to continue supporting heart patients and their families.

Will you be there to cheer them on? Let us know!

I hope that I make a difference and support the work you do.

NIAMH - ECHO LONDON MARATHON RUNNER 2019



Ian:

I've always been quite a fair-weather, casual runner, and have never run a marathon. But every year as a spectator I experience the amazing atmosphere at my home marathon in Brighton and think to myself 'one day I'd like to do that'. Then I think about the months of winter training, and all of the long runs, and think 'maybe another year'.

But I couldn't put it off forever, so I'm very excited to be running this year's Brighton marathon. I've embraced the cold, the dark, the rain and snow in my training. I've become obsessed with my GPS watch. Running's such a simple and natural activity, but I hadn't realised just how many facets there are to marathon preparation: what to eat and drink and when, recovery, injuries, training sessions, heart rate zones, the course, the weather, kit, pacing, how to drink from a paper cup whilst on the move!.... I think I've probably spent more time reading about running than I have actually running.

I'm running for ECHO because my daughter Martha had an operation to repair a VSD in 2015, when she was three months old. I'd never really thought about congenital heart disease until Martha's prenatal diagnosis, but having gone through it I understand how frightening the whole experience can be for families. The services at the Evelina are phenomenal, and we were overwhelmed by the care and

attention that Martha received from the wonderful hospital staff. ECHO does a great job of supporting families through difficult times, and I was surprised to find out that they don't receive any NHS or government funding, so I'm really hoping that my run will help to raise some money and awareness for ECHO.

Martha's now a happy, healthy, cheeky four year old and I'll be looking out for her in the crowd on marathon day.

Ian, Heart Dad to Martha



Alice:

I am running the Brighton Marathon on Sunday 14th April 2019 for Evelina Children's Heart Organisation because they support children with heart conditions.

I work at King's College London alongside researchers who work hard to find out how the heart works, why it can go wrong and how to improve diagnoses and treatment for those with heart conditions. However research can only go so far so it's great that the charity ECHO can support families in other ways. On a personal level, my daughter Molly has a heart and lung condition so I am fully aware of how it can impact on families.

Alice Taylor-Gee, Public Engagement Manager @ School of Biomedical Engineering and Imaging

Sciences, King's College London



Matt:

On the 28th April 2019, I will be running the London Marathon for Evelina Children's Heart Organisation. Being completely honest, I knew very little about ECHO & the incredible work they do to help people in such a difficult and life changing situation.

This was until my best friends daughter required heart surgery at birth. I can't even begin to fathom how difficult the situation would have been. However, ECHO were there with them through the entire ordeal. All friends & family are eternally grateful. I'm so happy to say that Sophie is still with us & fighting fit!

The training has been gruelling but extremely rewarding. I was at a point in my life where I was probably drinking too much & not maintaining a balanced diet. I needed a catalyst to change my day to day routine - whimsically applying for a marathon will definitely do this! For someone that has never been into running, I now find it almost therapeutic and a way to disconnect from the world (... and screens!) You won't find a better charity. You won't find a better challenge.

[Matt's fundraising page](#)



Niamh:

I first learnt about ECHO Charity when I was helping out at my Mum's Preschool, after getting to know the Children there I met twins Harriet and Olivia. Harriet was born with Hydro-Plastic left heart syndrome. After chatting to her parents I gained some understanding of their experiences after Harriet was born. I could not begin to imagine what they had been through as a family. It was heart warming watching Harriet join in with all the activities at Preschool and how her sister was so caring and always wanting to check Harriet was OK going down the stairs or attempting something a little more challenging, (not that she always wanted help) from what I understand Mum says she is the dare devil and always wants to go faster!!

When I got a place in the London Marathon, I asked the Twin's parents if they would like to choose a charity, they told me about all the support ECHO gave to all of there family and how ECHO relies on donations to support their hard work. My mind was made up!! I hope that I make a difference and support the work you do.

[Niamh's fundraising page](#)

Thank you to all our marathon runners this year, and years gone by. You are making a huge difference to the lives of children with heart conditions and their families. We do not receive any NHS or government funding so rely entirely on the generosity and determination of people like you. Thank you!