

## Three associates from Boca Raton treatment center will take on Sahara's heat to run in 150-mile ultra marathon

Linda Quirk



Rating 3.00 out of 5 ★★☆☆ [?]

BOCA RATON – Running a marathon is a tough enough task.

But three people associated with a Boca Raton-based addiction treatment center, Caron Renaissance, left Sept. 30 for Egypt to take part in a 150-mile ultra marathon in Africa's Sahara Desert. During the race, they will be carrying all their provisions and camp items on their backs.

On Sept. 30, the last day of National Addiction Recovery Month, Michael Herbert of Delray Beach and Afshin Karnama of Lake Worth, joined 57-

year-old grandmother, Linda Quirk, in her Run7on7 mission to raise scholarship dollars for Caron Renaissance.

Herbert is a member of Caron Renaissance's clinical team. Karnama, a branch manager for PNC Bank, is a member of Caron Renaissance's board of directors. Both men have volunteered to support Quirk, who is a fellow board member and parent of a Caron Renaissance alumnus.

Caron is a nonprofit addiction treatment center that helps those affected by alcohol and drugs and their families begin a new life.

Linda's stepdaughter, Katherine, began her journey from methamphetamine addiction to recovery at Caron Renaissance in Florida, something Linda said she is forever grateful for.

Herbert and Karnama are two of seven volunteers who have joined to run one of the four deserts with Linda. The volunteers were tasked to raise a minimum of \$5,000 for the scholarship fund and to train extremely hard to prepare for the journey ahead. Some have never run a half-marathon, let alone 150-miles.

Those who want to track the runners can visit [www.run7on7.com](http://www.run7on7.com) for additional background as well as facts about this race.

The Sahara Desert is considered one of the world's most amazing places. It's the largest hot desert, stretching more than 5,000 kilometers across 13 countries. The course for the Sahara Race 2010 passes through the Valley of the Whales (locally known as Wadi El-Hitan). It is a UNESCO world heritage site which means that it is protected and not many people are permitted the opportunity to visit. Runners will literally be passing whale fossils and other sea life remains from more than 8,000 years ago.

The race is divided into six sections. There are checkpoints approximately every 10 kilometers (six miles) where volunteers and a medical doctor are stationed to give water. Each checkpoint also has a tent providing shade. Course temperatures can reach as high as 50°C (122°F) – with lows of 10°C (50°F) at night.

The terrain is largely sand — a mixture of soft sand and hard-packed sand as well as many sand dunes.

Runners are required to bring a hydration system that is capable of carrying at least 2.5 liters of water. The standard water allocation is 1.5 liters at each checkpoint along the course and 4.5 liters at the final checkpoint of each stage (which is at camp), but it is possible that runners will be required to leave a checkpoint with up to 2.5 liters of water if the temperature is particularly hot.

The runners will also be carrying sleeping bags.



Michael Hebert