

Stars Appeal Success Story



Grand Canyon Trek USA



FACTBOX



CHALLENGE NAME	Grand Canyon Trek
TYPE	Trek
DURATION	10 days / 9 days
NO. IN GROUP	11 (average)
AGE GROUP	28 - 54



CHALLENGE OVERVIEW

We were based at a camp on the Havasupai Indian Reservation west of the Grand Canyon's main tourist focus, and trekked each day through different parts of the canyon. The trekking was challenging and the heat exhausting, but the landscapes were incredible, with striking colours, rock formations, beautiful blue-green creeks and waterfalls - great opportunities for a dip!

We finished our adventure with a celebration in Las Vegas, a contrast more to the natural beauty of the canyon!



Why did Stars Appeal decide to embark on running their own Bespoke Fundraising Challenge?

We have had some success with individuals trekking for us in the past. Then we were approached to do a bespoke trip by two previous trekkers. As one is the owner of a local successful hairdressing group and the other presents the local radio breakfast show, we were sure that together we would attract a lot of interest. As we are a small charity, it was important that we would be able to recruit trekkers and support them within our existing set-up. Having this high impact local support, and turning one volunteer to focus almost entirely on the trek, allowed us to do that without damaging our existing programme.

Why did you choose Discover Adventure for your Grand Canyon Trek and upcoming Inca Trail Trek?

Initially it was because they are local to our hospital and have supported the Stars Appeal in the past. However we were keen to make the decision for all the right reasons so our partners looked at alternative suppliers. They felt that in terms of cost, support levels, trip design, responsiveness and flexibility, Discover Adventure came out on top. The additional promise of a donation per trekker was a wonderful bonus!

What are the three key elements that you feel has made this so successful?

1. Local – our catchment area covers less than 50,000 people and fits very closely with Spire FM's. That means we can use recommendations, friend-get-friend, Facebook, Twitter as well as local radio promotion to recruit. It also means we can get potential trekkers together to launch the trek.

2. Personal – people build strong personal connections with Salisbury District Hospital - as patients, seeing their loved ones here or through working here. That encourages them to want to give something back. We are immensely proud that people who spend their working lives here would choose to spend time raising money for our hospital.

3. Inspirational - Sharing the stories of why trekkers decided to trek has definitely inspired others. Martin and Jayne, who are well known in the community, plus other trekkers who have plenty of local connections, have been fantastic at inspiring others. And for many of our trekkers the stimulus has been the chance to take on a new challenge and visit an inspiring destination – many had not actively supported the Stars Appeal before.



How many who completed the Grand Canyon trek have returned to complete the Inca Trail Challenge?

Of our 21 we have 11 returning, plus the partner of 1, some friends and myself, who organised Grand Canyon but didn't go.

- How do you think you have managed to maintain your fundraisers (and sponsors) enthusiasm?

For the fundraisers: It's a fine balance of keeping in touch – mainly by email and Facebook – often but not too much and with 'new news' rather than repeats. And the Canyon trekkers are now a self-contained social group with regular walks, dinners and an anniversary trip to the Lake District.

For the sponsors: As a charity we try to keep our messages fresh and interesting. When the Grand Canyon trekkers were fundraising we had a major campaign going to raise money for a new Breast Care Unit. Now we are focusing on all the amazing things that the Stars Appeal funds every day. Some trekkers have chosen to support a ward that is particularly important to them and that helps them to promote their cause to their sponsors.

You've managed to increase the number of people taking part from the Grand Canyon to the Inca Trail– What do you think has been the key reason for this?

Success! The publicity we had for the £68k raised by the Grand Canyon trekkers has really helped people see this opportunity and believe that they can succeed. That's why people are trekking again and have recruited friends and customers. I also think that Machu Picchu is a big pull.

How do you go about choosing which challenge to do? Do you involve your fundraisers in this decision?

Grand Canyon was a no brainer after the success of Heart FM (who were very helpful in giving advice when we were starting out). Machu Picchu took us longer but again we looked for somewhere that would have immediate appeal and that's easy to describe on radio!

The Outcomes



How do you support your fundraisers regarding gaining sponsorship and keep them engaged during the long lead up to the challenge?

Regular emails, Facebook updates (in a private group) and get-togethers – we think we will go for quarterly this time. We're also taking a group round the hospital to see our work in action.

We share ideas, best practice, motivational tips for fundraising. We also provide event posters and trek branded sponsor forms. We've also shared our videos and created Powerpoint templates for trekkers to use when promoting their treks. We share event info on our Stars Appeal Facebook page so that our supporters can see what's going on

We share stories with Spire FM and with the local newspaper to help trekkers get support.

What has your bespoke challenge treks enabled you to fundraise so far for the Stars Appeal?

TOTAL
FUNDRAISING
£68,000
per event

What do you value about running your challenges through Discover Adventure?

Great support from the DA team, right from choosing the challenge through trekker recruitment to adding an extra trip. Responsive to questions and pushback. And great feedback from trekkers on the quality of the trek itself, especially leadership and guides.

As with most things, it's all about the people.



We believe that going above and beyond to make a difference to the life of another, and fulfilling a lifetime goal, are things that everyone should have the opportunity to do.

Challenge events enable your fundraisers to feel a sense of exhilaration, achievement and fulfilment.

We're here to help you deliver that, so in turn your organisation can support more people and projects each year from funds raised through challenges.

Keen to discuss your own plans?

01722 718444

charity@discoveradventure.com

www.discoveradventure.com

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