

India's Running for the Sick Kids

✘ An Edinburgh student is set to push herself to the limit to raise money for the city's sickest children – and she wants others to do the same.

Twenty-three-year-old India Dodgson, a volunteer with the Sick Kids Friends Foundation, will pull on her running shoes in May to run the Edinburgh Marathon to raise money for the charity. This is her first attempt at the 26 mile race and she is looking forward to the challenge.

The Heriot Watt University student has worked with the charity for two years and currently volunteers at the Drop-In Centre, which is located near the Royal Hospital for Sick Children in Edinburgh.

She said: "I originally got involved with the Sick Kids Friends Foundation through a friend who was also a volunteer for there. She told me about the work they did and I applied for a place.

"After seeing how beneficial the service it provides is I decided I wanted to raise money for them as it is a great cause. I ran the half marathon two years ago and decided this year to take on the full one."

The Drop-In Centre, which is the only one of its kind in the UK, opened six years ago and provides a facility for sick children and their families to go outwith the hospital. With four members of staff and 11 volunteers, the centre is able to provide visitors with support and advice as well as offering a wide range of activities for the children including arts and crafts, a Wii, computers, board games and films.

The Centre is funded entirely by SKFF, which donates £150,000 a year to run it – and is India's motivation to run the marathon and raise as much money as possible.

India said: "I volunteer at the Drop-In Centre on Thursday evenings and I love it – we have lots of fun.

"It is a great place for the parents and family members of children to come to, relax and just have a chat. It's lovely to see how the patients and families enjoy the facility and how it helps them de-stress. The staff and other volunteers are brilliant so it has been a really enjoyable experience and a great place to be a part of."

India is originally from North Yorkshire but moved to Edinburgh to study at Heriot Watt University. Having finished her undergraduate degree in Chemistry, India is now studying for her PhD in Supramolecular Chemistry.

The generous student is one of 35 runners who has already pledged to raise funds for SKFF by taking part in Marathon activities on the 26th and 27th of May – whether that is by

running the full marathon, half marathon, 5k or 10k.

Maureen Harrison, Chief Executive of the Sick Kids Friends Foundation, said: "Not only does India give up her time for SKFF but she is taking on this exciting challenge to raise money for the charity – we can't thank her enough. Every penny she raises will be ploughed straight into funding for the Drop-In Centre, which is an integral part of the Royal Hospital for Sick Children.

"SKFF depends on the generosity of people and we wish India and all our other runners all the best for the marathon in May."

Anyone interested in joining India in her race to raise funds for SKFF should contact Rachel McKenzie, Community Fundraising Manager, at rachel.mckenzie@luht.scot.nhs.uk.

India has set herself a target of £1,000 and has set up a [JustGiving page](#). She is also hosting a Bake Sale on Thursday May 1 at the university.