Shoe4Africa ready to launch a multi million shilling children hospital in Eldoret

By JONATHAN KOMEN

Eldoret Town comes alive when Shoe4Africa lays ground for a multi million shilling public children hospital on New Year's Eve.

The project, which will be their second public children's hospital in Sub-Sahara Africa after the first one in South Africa, has attracted support from sports celebrities.

They include academics best actress winner Natalie Portman, FIFA World Player of the Year and a Olympic and World Champions, among them Kenya's Lake Sammy Wanjiru, who became an ambassador in the 2007 Shoe4Africa race.

Consequently, the annual Shoe4Africa 5km run in June would shift to Eldoret with the groundbreaking ceremony of the facility to be held at Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital grounds.

John Tanzer, the Shoe4Africa director and former athlete, said it will be a milestone to obscure charity as they begin the project.

"Currently for a population of 800 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa, there is only one dedicated children's hospital, 5,000 km away in Cape Town, South Africa. "

"With our small obscure charity, we will start our num-

ber two, breaking ground on a vacant lot in the ground of the Moi Referral Teaching Hospital," Tanzer told Fever Pitch by telephone yesterday. "

Tanzer founded Shoe4Africa back in 1995 when giving away one pair of running shoes to an aspiring runner.

"I've never dreamed that a trip to Kenya would take me on the path to building this children's hospital. And for him, the journey has been both rewarding but rough."

PUBLIC HEALTH

Tanzer, an author and a director at the New York Marathon, said: "Where I grew up, every child had access to children's public health."

"I lived in a hospital for a couple of months after shoveling multiple bones in my right arm, it was like being in a hotel."

He said the challenges making the groundbreaking ceremony makes the landmark project unique.

"It might not have been initiated had it not been for the warm hospitality runners I offered to them a decade ago, and most importantly it is a journey entailing the spirit that one can make a difference in the world," said Tanzer.

The race has in the past attracted interest from its Olympic and world champions. Douglas Wakihurin Keitany and world champions, led dozens of children in a peace race.

Kenya's first ever Olympic medalist, Wilson Kipketer has also attended the proceedings.

Shoe4Africa has put the building of public set that have been built to host the athletes Martin Lel and fellow champions in Nairobi, Sally Kipyego and Moses Tanui in Mabaraket.