Million dollar charity run

I THOUGHT
TOBY'S RUN
WAS AMAZING.
HE DIDN'T DO IT TO BE THE
BEST OR ANYTHING.
HE DID IT TO HELP
CHARITY.
SO ALL THE
PAIN, ALL THE
HARD WORK IS TO JUST
HELP OTHER
PEOPLE.

Mo Farrar,
Great Britain's
double
European
Champion.

easy but I saw straight away he had
the discipline and the moxie," said
Farrar. On day two, it was 41 degrees
on the thermometer and near 95
percent humidity. There was abso-
lutely no shade as he ran exposed
across the Taran desert.

Tanser recalled how he stopped
to urinate and passed pure blood,
almost fainting with each step.
He sheddered on, having to jump
over a big black snake that blocked
his path on day three, seeing a pride
of lions on day four (luckily after
they had eaten) and nearly slipping
on a scorpion on day five.

In the evenings, he would meet
friends and stay at local hotels, col-
lapsing like a dead man on the mat-
tress, trying to recoup for the next
day's dose of kilometres.

"I was so worried that my feet was
going to get a stress fracture from all
the milage, it was painful from day
even and I was running the equiva-
 lent of two marathons per day.
"I could not contemplate quitting
and any time the going got tough, I
focused on Kenyan children I knew
had died because of inadequate
healthcare.

"I said to myself if you had raised
this money sooner and built this
hospital years ago, they would have
ever died. Why are you compli-
menting, you are here, alive!"

Luckily, fate had it in store for
Tanser to reach the peak, and on
noon, Sunday, November 28, he
reached the stars of Africa, summit-
ing the world's highest free-standing
mountain.

"I would have got up a day earlier.
First, we were delayed in waiting
for the park to open, and then the
porters carrying our food were so far
behind on the first day that we had
to walk till the evening for half
way up the mountain so we could eat
something.

So on the next morning, my
guide, Simon Atuy, who holds the
unassisted ascent record on Kilimanjaro,
said: "Let's leave the porters behind, carry our own sup-
plies and summit. We'll meet them when we descend."
And that is what happened.

All in all, Tanser was on foot, nine
hours going up the mountain, and
said on reaching the peak, the only
emotion he felt was relief.

"To hit one million dollars was
incredible. I did not even look at
the view at the top, I just wanted to
touch the signpost and get back to
Kenyans to celebrate with my friends
Pieter Langehorst and Lornah Ki-
sepot knowing I've hit a million!"

"I am still a long way from com-
pleting the hospital. The journey
to raise the first million dollars is
now done and now I embark on the
next leg: I can't give up, I owe it
to the children of Africa," concludes
Tanser, drawing a sip of java coffee
from his favorite cafe in Adams Ar-
cade, Nairobi.

"Kenyas is God's land, the best
people I have ever found and believe
you me, I have really travelled all
over the world, we just need more
opportunities over here, that is all.
Just the things people in other
countries take as a birth right... like
kids getting basic public healthcare
in their own hospital."

HOW I DID IT

Ronaldo and
Webber among
Tanser's sports
charity sponsors

BY TOBY TANSER
toby@straco.org

"Two years ago when I decided to build this
hospital, I was sitting in (two Boston
Marathon champions), Moses Tanui's café in
El dorado, during the post-election clashes,
and I had just visited the Kiambu Church.

I had met a lady whose child was burned
alive in the devastating event to what might
be the biggest day in Kenyan history.

She had told me there had to be something
positive and meaningful come out of this trau-
maty. It was then I was given the proposal
for a children's hospital, that day.

And I had wanted to build a place where
people came for healing and when I found out
there was not a public children's hospital in
sub-Saharan Africa. It became the obvious
mission, a most prophetic... but, hey, I did not
have a job or a large bank account, and I now
needed to find one billion Kenya shillings!

I decided to try and build a website with
the virtual brick of donations by soliciting ac-
quaintances to raise the required money.

I emailed seven friends planning to build
a web page with one layer of bricks (with
each person's name on the brick). Only two friends
responded, Marty Levine and Christine Billay,
so on my own, we now had three bricks.

I just used photoshop to stretch those bricks
could be more.

Then I emailed more friends and said
please donate, I'll put your name on the 'wall
of fame.'

My motto was click (your mouse) for a
brick. It took a lot of work, many, many unsaw-
nered emails and phone calls, but more
and more donations flowed in.

TV drama series ER actor Anthony Edwards
(Dr Mark Greene), my good friend and then
the chairman of ShoeAfrica, made a most
generous donation of six figures, as did a
leading American electronics company, who
wishes to remain anonymous, spurred on by Edwards'
contributions.

Actress Rosario Dawson, Natalie Pertman,
Wendy Goodspeed, RA Nooten, Helen Montog-
celler star and ShoeAfrica ambassador Cristiana
Borbon, Formula one driver Mark Webber and
Michael Stipe of REM have all followed suit.

By the end of 2006, there was a real buzz on
the website.

People who have sent shoes include names
like Snoopy Dogg Dog, Elijah Wood, Jake
Clemons, Eliza Doolittle, and Ashley
Jensen.