



## **PRESS RELEASE**

**Immediate Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2020**

### **VIRTUAL BALLOON RACE DRAMATICALLY INCREASES CHARITY FUNDING**

The world's only virtual balloon race system, developed by Purepages Group in Manchester, is helping UK and global charities raise money during this Coronavirus lockdown. With draconian social distancing guidelines operating, all physical charity fundraising events are now cancelled, causing major funding shortfalls. Ecoracing.co, however, is a totally Internet based platform, so there is no physical contact with charity supporters required at any point.

Ruth Masters, events manager at Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice was highly delighted, "We have had a great experience working with Eco Racing and taking part in their Easter Virtual Balloon Race. We signed up



just 4 days before the event began, not knowing how many balloons we could sell in such a short space of time but were really pleased to sell over 2,000 balloons. This event really captured our supporter's imaginations and social media was invaluable in spreading the message. The virtual balloon race was a great way for us to offer a safe, fun and interactive event experience with our supporters during a difficult time and we were really pleased to raise over £5,500 for Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice Care at no cost to us. It was the perfect, no risk, high return virtual event we were looking for!"

Mike Phillips, Managing Director of Ecoracing.co, explained, "It's a seven-day computer simulation race where everything is real except the balloon. The software uses current live weather data to determine the progress of each balloon and each entry can be tracked on Google Maps and Satellites once launched. It has no negative environmental impact on birds, animals, climate change, plastic waste or litter."

He continued, "You can buy a virtual balloon for £3 and give it a name, colour, shape and pattern. In addition to this, you can select different features of your balloon, such as helium content, which will determine its flight performance in order to enhance your chances of winning."

Mike added, "It's a fun and easy way to raise funds for a cause, which kids and adults alike love."

In the last few days, The British Red Cross have rolled out the platform to all their regional branches. Max Newton, Fundraising Manager (North) for the charity said, "I think a virtual balloon race is a wonderful thing to do while we're all in lockdown. People and communities can both come together virtually and - via their balloons - can travel the world virtually. Ecoracing run a fantastic platform that anyone can pick up and go with within a few minutes and raise money for their cause. I think it could really take off so we're gonna give it a go!"



Stressing the environment protection aspects of Ecoracing, Josh Harris, Communications Director of leading road safety charity, Brake, said, "minimising human impact on the environment is vital to



Brake, as a charity committed to safe and healthy mobility. Virtual balloon races are a great way for us to engage our supporters in fundraising in an eco-friendly way, demonstrating our values and providing some light relief as we all adjust to the new normal of staying home to help protect the NHS."

Internationally, the system is now into Ireland with races starting shortly in California, Canada and New Zealand.



**ENDS**

For more information, case studies and resources

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