

Miles for a mission: World-class Bend runner takes on Iditarod Trail to benefit St. Charles Rehab Center

by Bend Weekly News Sources

Local mom and business owner Kami Semick also happens to be one of the top ultra runners in the world at the 100k distance. And she's currently in training for one of her biggest challenges yet: the Iditarod Invitational -- a 350 mile journey through the Alaskan winter wilderness, on foot, pulling a sled loaded with survival gear. The race is scheduled to begin February 24th.

Kami Semick of Bend, Oregon will run the 350-mile Iditarod Invitation to benefit the St. Charles Rehabilitation Center. "I want to give disabled children and young adults in Central Oregon access to physical therapy and rehabilitation in order to live life to the fullest extent possible," said Semick. Kami is keeping an online blog about the experience (www.milesforamission.com), including her insights about the people she has met at the St. Charles Rehabilitation Center, and training efforts (like pulling truck tires through soft dirt). Once the race starts, she will report daily from the trail via satellite phone. About the athletes: As members of The North Face Endurance Team, Kami and her teammate Diane Van Deren's expenses and gear will be underwritten, allowing 100% of the funds raised to go directly to charity. Kami Semick is one of the top ultra runners in the world at the 100k distance. She is also a national trail champion in the 50k distance, and an accomplished 100-mile runner. Diane Van Deren completed 260 miles of the Iditarod course in 2004, only to fall into a moose hole and break an ankle. Diane is an accomplished 100-mile ultra runner, winning two of the five 100 mile races she completed in 2006. About the event: The Iditarod Invitational (www.alaskaultrasport.com) is the World's longest human-powered winter race -- a no frills, limited-support race put on by racers, for racers. There are three categories: bike, run or ski. Kami and Diane will be running 350 miles together as a team with a goal of finishing in 8 days or less. Each racer is responsible for carrying their own survival gear. For Kami and Diane, this means pulling 40 lb. sleds. About the causes: Kami is running and raising funds in support of the Rehabilitation Center at St. Charles Medical Center, serving Central Oregon. The center offers both inpatient and outpatient services. St. Charles Medical Center-Bend has a 12-bed inpatient Rehabilitation Center that cares for patients recovering from stroke, head injury, major trauma and other debilitating conditions. The facility is the only one of its size and scope in Central Oregon. Key inpatient programs include comprehensive post-operative orthopedic care, neurological/stroke care, cardiac rehabilitation/post-operative rehabilitation, vestibular evaluation and treatment, augmentative communication and therapeutic recreation. Outpatient rehabilitation services (physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, pediatric rehabilitation) also include additional specialty programs for ongoing supervised exercise therapy and comprehensive balance testing. The St. Charles Outpatient Rehabilitation Program also specializes in care for children and adolescents. Specially trained physical therapists, speech-language pathologists and occupational therapists work closely with families and schools in caring and treating children. For more information, visit www.scmc.org.

Diane is running and raising funds for Craig Hospital in Englewood, Colorado, a spinal cord and traumatic

brain injury rehabilitation hospital. Diane was treated at Craig Hospital following radical brain surgery to remove part of her right temporal lobe to treat debilitating epilepsy.

To support the Miles for a Mission effort with a donation, contact the St. Charles Foundation at 541.383.6996 or <http://www.scmc.org/foundation.html>.

Miles for a mission: World-class Bend runner takes on Iditarod Trail to benefit St. Charles Rehab Center by Bend Weekly News Sources