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Oceans of Hope Visits Portsmouth as Part of Global Journey for MS Sufferers

Published: 27th June 2014 12:17



Oceans of Hope and crew

Oceans of Hope, the yacht undertaking the first world circumnavigation with a crew including people with multiple sclerosis (MS), will arrive in Portsmouth today.

The 67-foot yacht is due to arrive in Gunwharf Quays on Thursday 3 July for four days when people with multiple sclerosis (MS) will be invited to take part in a day of sailing on Friday 4 July.

Oceans of Hope is the flagship vessel of a Sailing Sclerosis Foundation campaign by the same name. The campaign aims to change perceptions of MS during the course of its 17-month global journey encouraging participation in sailing as the yacht makes its way around the world. The voyage began in Copenhagen, Denmark, on 15 June 2014 and will continue across the globe with further stops in Europe, United States, South America, Australia and Africa, ending the voyage back in Copenhagen next fall.

People with MS from all over the world can take part in the voyage. Places are still available on board Oceans of Hope throughout its global journey. To find out more and apply to take part, download the application forms at www.sailing-sclerosis.com.

Local Hampshire resident Phil Gowers will join the crew in Portsmouth. He has been confirmed as the first British crew member to take part in the ground-breaking voyage to change the perceptions of what people living with MS can achieve. He will sail out of Portsmouth on 6 July heading for La Rochelle, France.



Phil Gowers has been offered a place on board Oceans of Hope

Phil, a father of two who lives in Gosport, said

he was "over the moon" to be offered a place on board. He said, "I want to inspire other people with MS to believe in hope again, to believe in yourself and what you can do. I have been diagnosed with MS for eight years, but have been able to continue my work as a dentist and hobbies including sailing by managing my periods of fatigue. I'm looking forward to meeting the other crew members, working together and supporting each during this amazing experience. I can't wait!"

Biogen Idec, has joined the Sailing Sclerosis Foundation's campaign, Oceans of Hope, as the Official Partner. . Founded in 1978, Biogen Idec is the world's oldest independent biotechnology company.

Dr Mikkel Anthonisen is the founder of the Sailing Sclerosis Foundation and creator of Oceans of Hope. He said, "I am really excited to bring Oceans of Hope to Portsmouth and the UK. We have already made links with the local MS Society with the aim of leaving a lasting legacy of inspiration and hope from our visit. It is fantastic that we will also be welcoming Phil on board at Portsmouth to represent the UK as part of the crew when we depart for La Rochelle."

George McAleese, Chairman of the Gosport and Fareham MS Society added, "We're really pleased to see one of our local members taking part in this exciting project and challenging assumptions of what people with MS can achieve. I hope lots of people will join us in showing their support for Phil and all the crew as we wave them off from Gunwharf Quays in a few weeks' time."

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