**2022 REPORT TO THE HIGH HALDEN VILLAGE MEETING**

LIFE IS NOT AN X BOX – 2022 MOROCCO ADVENTURE 2nd August to 10th august 2022

The great success of the five previous annual adventures was interrupted for two years by Covid.

2022 has proved to be much more hopeful and, on that basis, I have 23 young people from all parts of |our county, plus three adult leaders with me for this year.

Everyone, as far as possible, pay for their own air fare, travel insurance, baggage and share of coach fare to and from Gatwick airport.

None of this adventure is possible without amazing sponsors who cover all costs for the 23, once landed at Marrakech. In Marrakech this includes all accommodation (Riad Omar) and meals, Omar our city guide, visits to Bahia Palace and Majorelle Gardens, transport to Imlil in the Atlas mountains for days 2 to 7, then Jamal and Mohammad my long standing friends and guides for the team for seven days trekking from our Riad Dar Assarou in Imlil. All food, mules, camels and water are paid for by such generous sponsors.

This is a unique opportunity to become self-reliant within a positive team environment; cooperate with others and become resilient to the physical and mental challenges that will present themselves. And they certainly do!

Treks are tough but ‘do-able’. Altitude is an issue but soon overcome and the real excitement of being in a totally different environment keeps everyone focussed on being a responsible person within an awesome team. The trek to Sidi Chamharouch is tricky but not many will have been to a mountain shrine where animals are sacrificed to help with family fertility issues. A trek to Tamataert village, where we have supported the children for six years, is one of the highlights. Taking imaginative gifts and clothing for the harsh winters, playing with the children and having mint tea and pastries is a real privilege.

This is not a holiday with mum and dad. Nor is it a school trip. This is about growing up quickly and seeing how other people live. Our key word is ‘Resilience’

The cost per young person, once landed in Morocco, is £380 for everything!! That’s just over £40 per day!

Two weeks ago I had a phone call telling me that my project has been validated by the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme as being sufficiently challenging to meet the requirements of the Gold Award Residential element. A real feather in our cap which three of the young people are taking advantage of.

I home visit all applicants to make sure I get suitable value for money for supporters and try to reach a broad range of abilities regardless of background. If the young people look as though they have potential then they’ll get a place in the team. In this team we have 3 from High Halden and a total of seven from Tenterden, Bethersden and Woodchurch.

If any of you would like to know more then please visit our website www.lifeisnotanxbox.com or contact David Ball via email d.a.ball@btinternet.com