

Media release

***Girls Who Dare* inspire girls across the world with San Francisco to Hawaii rowing race**

Three women, known as “Girls Who Dare”, are taking on the challenge of a lifetime when they race from San Francisco to Hawaii in a 24 foot rowing boat.

The women-only crew are taking part in the Great Pacific Race in June 2021 and are aiming to break the current women’s world record of 62 days, 18 hours, 36 minutes.

The Girls, Vicki Anstey, Jane Leonard and Orlagh Dempsey are raising awareness of the many opportunities that exist for girls and women to step outside of their comfort zones and live their lives to full – at the same time as raising funds for their three charities.

[Inspiring Girls International](#) is a charity dedicated to raising the aspirations of young girls around the world by connecting them with women role models and combatting gendered perceptions of career choices. Inspiring Girls USA launched in 2020 and is now working with girls from coast to coast.

[The Harlequins Foundation](#), is an independent charity of which Vicki Anstey, one of the crew, is an ambassador. Their aim is to “Build Brighter Futures” and they passionately believe in the power of sport to transform lives, through programmes that champion inclusivity, promote wellbeing and improve the life opportunities of the most vulnerable in society.

[Mates in Mind](#) is a registered UK charity raising awareness, addressing the stigma of poor mental health and promoting positive mental wellbeing across workplaces.

The team, who didn’t know each other before this challenge, are brought together by their shared belief that anything is possible if you dream, dare, do.

(Orlagh/Jane/Vicki from Girls Who Dare) said: *“We want to be a relatable example to young girls showing that they can dream big, dare to believe in those dreams, and do whatever it takes to make those dreams a reality.*

“We all face challenges in life and it’s knowing how to keep going when times are tough, and everything seems overwhelming that makes achieving big goals possible.

“The values of Inspiring Girls align so well with our own philosophy in taking on this challenge and we hope we can inspire girls everywhere looking for a challenge.”

Inspiring Girls’ founder Miriam Gonzalez-Durantez, said:

“I founded Inspiring Girls International to make it easy for girls everywhere to have access to women role models.

“There are millions of women out there doing amazing things, and young girls should be able to look to them to realise how many possibilities they have in life.

“I cannot think of better examples than Orlagh, Jane and Vicki and we are delighted they are supporting us and providing the opportunity for a group of girls from San Francisco to meet three amazing role models before they depart.

Background on the Great Pacific Race

With a distance of 2400 nautical miles, the Great Pacific Race is one of the toughest races on earth. Teams made up of 3 or 4 crew all competing in identical boats, will be entirely self-supported and unassisted from the start gun in San Francisco until the finishing line in Hawaii.

Girls Who Dare will be challenged physically, mentally and emotionally by the greatest force on earth, the ocean. They will be rowing 3 hours on and 3 hours off for 24 hours a day, eating dehydrated rations, battling extreme weather and up to 50 foot swells. They will be pushed to breaking point by sleep deprivation, physical and mental fatigue, salt sores, seasickness and weight loss. They will run the risk of encounters with sharks and other wildlife, as well as large ships.

Girls Who Dare is made up of:

Vicki Anstey (43) who appeared on *SAS: Who Dares Wins* and made it to the final 8. Vicki runs her own fitness business and is also a motivational speaker. She is not a rower and has never been to sea. She has a highly developed fear of water that she will be facing in the most extreme way possible.

Orlagh Dempsey (27) who is currently working in physical health & education as a lead, developing programs to progress the culture of sport in the United Arab Emirates. Growing up in Ireland, sports and fitness have always been an integral part of Orlagh's life. She has always been committed to playing competitive sports, including Gaelic football and soccer. Like the race itself, she believes that life is about sailing outside of your comfort zone. It is truly about the journey and who you become along the way.

Jane Leonard (37) who has had a 10-year career in the British Army, joining the Royal Engineers and becoming the first female Physical Training Instructor within the Regular Service. Jane has also had an outstanding rugby career, captaining London Wasps, the British Army and the United Kingdom Armed Forces Rugby teams, plus representing her country and playing Internationally for England.

Supporters will be able to track the race progress on the website when they set off at www.dreamdaredo.org.uk