

Setting up a Raleigh Support Group

Local support groups are a great way for you to keep the spirit of Raleigh alive once you've returned. Not only can you continue to make new friends and build on your skills, you can also play a vital role in helping us to be all we can be.

Getting started

Starting a Raleigh support group can seem like a daunting task, but don't worry, help is at hand! You can find a load of downloadable leaflets, posters and guides in the alumni resource section on our website www.raleigh.org.uk/alumni which should help you on your way.

Debra Hay is our alumni manager based in head office and she will help in anyway she can, from giving informal advice and answering any questions you may have, to attending meetings and promoting the work of your group.

Please don't hesitate to contact Debra on 020 7183 1280 or debra.hay@raleigh.org.uk

Recruiting members

You may wish to begin with some key people and recruit more members at a later stage, or you could invite all previous volunteers in your area to the very first meeting. It's entirely up to you. However, every member of the group should have a role to play or a task to fulfil so they feel valued and stay motivated.

Here are some ideas on recruiting members to your group:

- Contact the alumni manager at head office who can pass you lists of departing and returning venturers and volunteer managers in your area. We will also add your group's details to the Raleigh website
- Write an informal and friendly email to new and recent venturers and volunteer managers inviting them to attend the first meeting or to get involved with the group. You can find a template email with some handy hints and tips in the alumni resource section
- Set up groups on social networking sites such as Facebook to let your friends and contacts know what you're involved in
- Display a poster on your school or university notice board or post a message on the Raleigh forum or on your company's intranet or internet. You can find downloadable posters in the alumni resource section
- Remember to invite friends and contacts along too. Support groups are not exclusively for people who have been or are going on expedition

The first meeting

Before your first meeting you should consider what you would like to achieve. You may want to produce an agenda to cover certain topics or you may wish to begin more informally. You could begin by discussing the work you did on expedition, how it made you feel and how you can get involved in similar work at home.

It may take some time for people to get to know each other and settle in. Why not try to capture the spirit of alpha groups on expedition? Remember, you have all come together to develop your skills, make new friends and support Raleigh and the work we do.

Once you are up and running you can consider various roles within the group. You might like to allocate or elect people into the following roles:

- Support group co-ordinator/chair - overall responsibility for the group, main point of contact with head office, facilitates meetings
- Treasurer - monitors support group funds and bank account, submits expenses to head office (see financial assistance for new support groups PDF) prepares support group accounts for head office when required
- Secretary - produces group newsletter and/or maintains online updates on social networking sites such as the group's Facebook page
- New members contact/s - encourages departing or returning venturers and volunteer managers to join the group
- Projects co-ordinator/s - responsible for community and conservation projects
- Fundraiser/s – co-ordinates support group fundraising events and initiatives
- Press officer/s – sends out press releases to the local media for support group's projects and events

Support group activities

There are many different activities your group can get involved with. You might want to begin by considering the interests and skills of your group members and think about how your group can support Raleigh together. Why not brainstorm to come up with as many ideas as possible. Once you have a list of possible activities you can discuss them as a group and decide which idea you'd like to do first.

- Get involved in the fourth challenge and make a difference by volunteering in your local community
- Support departing and returning venturers and volunteer managers
- Hold social evenings (you may wish to extend the invitation to people who have not had any prior involvement with Raleigh)

- Give presentations to local schools, universities and other youth groups in your area on your expedition and the work we do
- Fundraise for Raleigh and your group
- Generate stories and press releases for your local paper on the work of your group and of Raleigh

To get the most from your group you should communicate regularly, have an open mind with your activities and approaches and above all, have fun!

Support group name

All Raleigh support groups in the UK are named after the area of which the group is based e.g. Raleigh London. This allows us to identify where our groups are based and also allows us to pass on details of your group to fellow venturers and volunteer managers.

We can also provide you with your own Raleigh support group logo. Get in touch with Debra for more information.

Nationwide network

Your group will be part of a nationwide network of other Raleigh groups who you can contact for ideas and advice. There are a number of ways in which you can contact other groups:

- Access the supporter groups' contact information from the website
- Find the groups on Facebook
- Contact the alumni manager at Head Office who can help you find active groups and volunteers in your region

Registering your group

It is important you let us know when you set up your group so that we can support you. For insurance and legal reasons we also need to be aware of all groups fundraising in the Raleigh name.

When you set up your group you should elect one person to be the main contact for the group. Once elected, they should complete the group registration form and email it to Debra.

Head office support

All groups can access useful materials in the alumni resources section. The alumni manager at head office is here to support you all the way so whether you'd like to have an



informal chat over the phone or if you'd like her to attend one of your meetings, please don't hesitate to contact Debra on 020 7183 1280 or debra.hay@raleigh.org.uk

And finally...

We want to thank you for choosing to set up a Raleigh support group. Your efforts and dedication will enable us to inspire more people to be all they can be, benefit your local community and raise awareness of Raleigh.

