

Press release

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Stoke employer, Fortis Insurance Solutions steps up to charity challenge

Staff from Fortis Insurance Solutions (FIS), based at Trentham Lakes, have recently completed a charity challenge raising over £600 to support their goal of travelling to Africa to assist in building a new school in a remote community. The activity was in response to ‘The Times Leadership Challenge’, with the aim of developing leadership motivation and management skills in a stimulating environment. Key managers from across the business entered a team into the programme to support Accounting for Africa, a charity body established to enable business contribution to specific community projects.

Fortis

Prospect House
Gordon Banks Drive
Trentham Lakes North
Stoke-on-Trent
ST4 4TW

Staff at FIS set up a walking team comprising of 8 people who attempted to replicate the 20 mile round trip often taken by Malawi children who currently have to walk to school in temperatures of between 90 and 110 degrees fahrenheit. The walk followed the canal path route from the FIS office base at Trentham Lakes to Westport Lake, one lap around the lake and then back again to the office. As an added twist it was completed whilst wearing school uniforms! The staff were authorised to do this as paid time off from work using a number of the 50 volunteers days set aside annually by the Fortis Foundation, allowing staff to take part in charitable activity.

Andrew Woodbridge, Management Coach at FIS who organised the walk said, “It was a wonderful day and I am delighted that staff took part to show their support for African children in their plight to receive basic education. Once our employees understood our motives for the campaign we were inundated with their support every step of the way!”

The fantastic day was also supported by a plethora of activity:

- ‘African Chief for the day’, Ray Westwick, Head of Call Centre and a member of the Fortis Leadership Challenge team sold over 200 of his home baked traditional African cakes for the worthy cause.
- Staff took part in a Wii sports African Nations Football competition where employees made donations to enter.

- An employee ‘dress down day’ with an African theme also with a donation from staff.
- The on site staff canteen had an African themed menu for the day serving traditional African soups, Mbata biscuits (sweet potato), Nthochi bread (banana) and Mtedza puffs (peanut).
- In keeping with the fun atmosphere, all Team Managers wore traditional African face paints for the day with a tribal design dedicated to their particular area.

Head of Human Resources, David Harrison said, “We were extremely pleased with the staff turnout and it was a pleasure to support such a worthwhile cause! We have raised over £600 and would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who took part. Fortis Insurance Solutions and The Fortis Foundation, under which all of our charity activity falls, is committed to supporting good causes that are important to our employees. The aim of the African day was to support our ultimate goal of sending Ray and his team to Malawi to help build the school. This will make a massive difference to the local children and their families. Our employees can be proud of their contribution to the success.”

In ‘The Times Leadership Challenge’ each participating six person team competes with three others in a number of challenge days with success hinging on the teams and individuals ability to deal with a series of situations and to take on a leadership role.

Fortis has successfully made the semi final due to be held 9- 10 September at Beaudesert Park, Cannock Wood, Staffordshire. Teams will then be selected from the semi finals to take part in the spectacular five day final in Malawi, involving hands on participation in a local community project in collaboration with Accounting for Africa. Each semi finalist has to raise funds as an additional contribution to the company entry fee of over £4,500, regardless of whether they make it to the final. The final involves travelling to Malawi to assist in a school building project.

Photo: Carl Bromley, Operations Manager - Sales and his team with painted faces.

Ends

Press Contacts:

Louisa Barnard Fortis UK

T: 023 8031 3147

E: louisa.barnard@fortis-uk.com



About Fortis

Fortis (Insurance UK) is a leading provider of award-winning personal, commercial and protection insurance solutions in the UK. Fortis UK has two main divisions, manufacturing both non-life and life products, which are distributed through a range of channels including brokers, IFAs, intermediaries, affinity partners and the Internet, as well as various wholly or partially-owned companies (RIAS, Fortis Insurance Solutions, Affinity Solutions Ltd, Text2Insure and InsureTECH Systems).

Insuring in excess of 6.7 million customers and working with a range of partners, Fortis is recognised for delivering consistent and high-quality customer experiences. It employs almost 3,000 people with a head office based in Eastleigh and others in Belfast, Bournemouth, Gloucester, Haywards Heath, London, Redditch, Reigate, and Stoke-on-Trent. In 2008, its life new annual premiums were reported at £2.77million. Its non-life profit before tax and interest was £76 million and its non-life GWP was £760 million.

Fortis (Insurance UK) is part of Fortis Insurance International, a global insurance group of significant scale with over EUR14bn turnover, 20 million customers and 10,000 employees worldwide.

Fortis Foundation

Fortis recently set up a UK Foundation focused on supporting charities through a volunteer programme involving employees from its business lines. The Foundation complements Fortis' existing charitable activity and allows up to an annual total of 250 working days to be dedicated to local volunteer activity by Fortis employees around the UK.