



PRESS RELEASE
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Yellow Ribbon Run helps to break down prejudices. It draws attention to employment of former prisoners

This year on the course of the Volkswagen Prague Marathon there will be held non-traditional relays with the motto „Run from prejudices!“. The relay teams will be made up of former prisoners, prison service representatives and directors of big companies. Runners will wear T-shirts decorated with a yellow ribbon aiming to draw attention to the problem of difficult employability of people released from prison. The Yellow Ribbon Run will be held in the Czech Republic and Europe for the first time, and moreover for the first time in history it will be a part of the world class race. Patronage to the event was granted by the Minister of Justice, the Ombudsman and the international organization International Corrections and Prisons Association. The event will be supported by 20 prestigious firms.

An idea to create the Yellow Ribbon Run came to Gabriela Slováková, the director of the women's prison in Světlá nad Sázavou. She attended the run with a yellow ribbon in 2011 in Singapore, where 11 editions created over two thousands working places for former prisoners. The concept of the project inspired the director and since then she wished to organize a similar action in the Czech Republic. The event was organized with the help of the Prison Service of the Czech Republic, the Business Leaders Forum platform, which associates socially responsible firms, and RunCzech, the organizer of the most prestigious run in the Czech Republic – the Volkswagen Prague Marathon.

What is the reason of the RunCzech involvement in the project? *“We are here to create certain values, and the Yellow Ribbon Run is one of them. I think it is very important to allow people who made a mistake and served their sentences to dignifiedly return back to society”*, says Carlo Capalbo, the President of the RunCzech Organizing Committee.

On the Prague streets there will be held several relays with yellow jersey. At the moment three convicted women from the prison in Světlá nad Sázavou and a prisoner from Kuřim are training for the run, and three ex-convicts promised to participate. They will run together with twenty top managers, representatives of international and Czech companies. The yellow ribbon which will be made by convicted women from Světlá nad Sázavou is not the relays attribute only. Every runner can pin the ribbon and thus express support the Yellow Ribbon Run during the marathon on May 8, 2016.

“The fact that we organize this run is a unique message for all those who are now in prison and will watch on TV that people “out there” put yellow ribbons on their lapels. By this act





they send a clear message to people in prison – when they come out of prison, they will be welcome in the society”, adds Iva Petříčková, the executive director of Business Leaders Forum, a platform for leading companies which claim the concept of socially responsible business.

The Volkswagen Prague Marathon is the first world class race supporting the idea of a run with yellow ribbon. *“We highly appreciate the courage and wisdom of Mr. Capalbo and believe that this project will contribute to improvement of prisoners’ employment in the Czech Republic as well. Recurrence of prisoners is not only a huge economical problem but primarily a human tragedy. We believe that it is possible to break stigmatization of people released from prison and open possibilities for a dignified life”, says Petříčková.*

„Our aim is to encourage employers to think of the fact that a released prisoner can be a grateful and reliable employee”, explains Gabriela Slováková. “If one released prisoner will get a job thanks to our project, it will be great”, adds Capalbo.

Further information:

Yellow Ribbon is a symbol of return to the society, a symbol of hope taken from the song *Tie a yellow ribbon round the old oak tree.*

The song is told from the point of view of someone who has „done his time“ but is uncertain if he will be welcomed home. He writes to his love, asking her to tie a yellow ribbon around the old oak tree in front of the house (which the bus will pass by) if she wants him to return to her life. If he does not see such a ribbon, he will remain on the bus taking that to mean he is unwelcome. Finally he sees 100 yellow ribbons around the old oak tree, a sign that he is being awaited at home.

We will be glad to provide you more details about the project; please contact us:

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