



# Diana runs with big heart

**C**OMMITTING to months of training will help a novice runner achieve a personal goal and improve the health of Kiwis with heart conditions.

Diana Philippe has spent a couple of years plodding around the streets of Howick but wanted a challenge to boost her motivation.

The 27-year-old entered the Auckland Half Marathon and signed up as a Heart Foundation Heart Racer after seeing an urgent call for supporters in the marathon's monthly newsletter.

"I talked to some athlete friends and they said, 'you should do it' and in a moment of madness I signed up for the half marathon," says Ms Philippe.

"Afterwards I couldn't believe - I'm actually doing it."

Heart Racers raise money for the Heart Foundation by competing in an official sporting event such as the Auckland Marathon on Sunday, November 1.

People who sponsor Ms Philippe will help the foundation to con-

tinue its work of funding lifesaving research, advancing cardiac rehabilitation and promoting heart-healthy lifestyles.

Cardiovascular disease, which includes heart disease and strokes, is still the biggest killer of New Zealanders, accounting for 40 per cent of all deaths annually.

Many of these deaths are premature and preventable.

"Becoming a Heart Racer gave me the opportunity to tell friends about a worthwhile charity that is doing great work to prevent the high heart disease death rates in New Zealand," says Ms Philippe.

"And as soon as I told people what my goals were and why I wanted to support the Heart Foundation, it confirmed the commitment I already made to myself. It's rewarding to know I am helping other Kiwis and it actually makes me enjoy my training more."

Torrential rain has proved challenging in her final days of training but nothing will deflate her enthusiasm now.

At 6.45am on Sunday, she will start the 21.1km course along with 6800 competitors.

Starting at Devonport, athletes will meander through the North Shore before crossing the harbour and finishing at Victoria Park.

She hopes running plenty of hill work will help her over the harbour bridge.

"I am amazed how much I have increased my stamina.

"I used to only be able to run for 8km but this morning I ran 15.8km, and felt incredibly good afterwards.

"My personal goal is to complete the race in less than two hours."

Ms Philippe has got to her fundraising goal of \$200 and is now aiming for \$500, so she is doing the rounds with friends and family.

Entries for the quarter marathon run of 10km and the 5km walk are still available. To sponsor Ms Philippe, and how to become a Heart Foundation Heart Racer, visit [www.heartracer.org.nz](http://www.heartracer.org.nz).



**REWARDING:** Diana Philippe will run for the Heart Foundation in the Auckland Half Marathon. Times photo