

Laura will lead crew on ocean marathon

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A FORMER Redruth School pupil will lead the first all-female crew in a marathon voyage across the world's largest ocean in memory of a close friend who died of breast cancer.

Laura Penhaul, from Camborne, near Redruth, visited her former school on Tuesday ahead of her 8,446-nautical-mile trip across the Pacific Ocean next spring.

Lead physiotherapist for the Paralympics athletics team, Miss Penhaul, will be joined by Emma Mitchell, Natasha Cohen and Isabel Burnham in their 20ft pink rowing boat nick-named 'Doris' on a journey which will last six months.

The women, calling themselves the Coalless Crew, hope to raise £250,000 to be split between Breast Cancer Care and Walking With The Wounded, a charity which helps women who have been injured in war.

Miss Penhaul said: "Through my job I have worked with a lot of people who have faced and overcome adverse situations and it has always made me think and inspired me to push myself to my physical limits."

A keen marathon runner and triathlete, the 31-year-old will be rowing for her good friend,

Rashid, who lost his wife, Patricia to an aggressive form of breast cancer last year.

She was diagnosed when she was three months' pregnant and the couple were told she would need radical surgery along with chemotherapy and radiotherapy which would not be suitable for their unborn child.

Surgeons were able to deliver their son, Yasin, eight weeks prematurely but despite treatment doctors found secondary cancer in her spine and brain and she died a few months later.

Miss Penhaul said: "If there was something we could do to bring Patricia back for Rashid, Yasin and their family I would do it in a flash but, instead, the only way we can help is by keeping her memory and story alive."

"This row is not about us, it is about those women and families that have had to face and fight adversity but don't get a chance for their voice to be heard."

Depending on weather and sea conditions, the crew hopes to set off from Long Beach California in April.

They will work a 'two-on, two-off' system, rowing in pairs in two-hour shifts, getting no more than 45 minutes' continuous sleep at a time.

Miss Penhaul said: "The biggest challenge will be the mental aspect of the row. Physically you can prepare your



■ Former pupil Laura Penhaul visited Redruth School with the boat, she hopes to row across the Pacific Ocean, with Year 10 students, from left, Sienna, Sophie, tutor Kirby Treloar, Molly, Rosie and Rosie.



body but the biggest training we are doing is psychological.

"We are all undergoing sessions with a sports psychologist to learn methods of coping with boredom and then how to snap yourself back into action

when, say, a big wave comes along."

"That is one thing I like about being a crew of four – when one, two or even three of you are feeling down, you have the support of your other crew member to pick you up."

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THE Coalless Crew is looking for sponsors to help them reach their £250,000 target for charities Breast Cancer Care and Walking With The Wounded.

The all-female crew hopes to gain £10 for each nautical mile it takes to cross the Pacific Ocean – 8,446 in total – through their 'buy a mile' campaign.

In return, each donor's name will be written on the walls of the pink

ocean rowing boat, named Doris.

Team member Laura Penhaul said: "We want to involve the public as much as possible and for £10 they get their name, or the name of a loved one, written on the cabin."

"They will then become part of the challenge and they will help to inspire and motivate us when we are under way."

To find out more or to donate to www.coallesscrew.com

All-female team needs sponsors



Focus on Tammy and dog Boots

A DEAF woman has been presented with a special award in celebration of the "life-changing" partnership she has with her dog at a star-studded event.

Tammy Thorne and Boots, from Redruth, took to the stage to rapturous applause and tears of admiration at the Hearing Dogs for Deaf People charity awards ceremony in London. Patron of the charity Princess Anne, Esther Rantzen and Britain's Got Talent winners Ashleigh and Pudsey presented the 40-year-old with the award for Life-Changing Partnership of the Year.

Tammy said she was left feeling lonely and isolated after losing her hearing in her early twenties when she became ill and her eardrum ruptured. She

was given Boots, an eight-year-old golden retriever cross Labrador, who has helped her deal with challenges including losing the use of her legs in 2009 when her degenerative spinal condition worsened.

Boots alerts Tammy to sounds she cannot hear such as the doorbell and alarm clock. He has also learnt to walk alongside her wheelchair, helps her to undress and picks up the post. She said: "Boots means the world to me, he's amazing."

Tammy has a part-time job and is a part-time volunteer at Cornwall Air Ambulance Trust, helping with office work and fundraising events. For more information about Hearing Dogs for Deaf People visit www.hearingdogs.org.uk