

GIRL POWER

Pinks in Charge, a new all-girl team, intends to give the boys a run for their egos at this year's Rhino Charge.

The *Twende*-supported team is made up of five young women who all have a passion for wildlife, motor sports and adventure. The annual Rhino Charge is not new to team leader, Mary-Ann Kirubi, who has participated twice before in otherwise all-male teams. After an unsuccessful start in 2007 caused by a weak fuel pump, she decided that sisters can do it for themselves, and it became her ambition to put together an all-girl team. The key motivator for Mary-Ann's participation in the Rhino Charge is her love for wildlife and tourism. She always seeks challenges and says, "the harder they get, the more one's character develops."

Mary-Ann approached a close friend of hers, co-team leader Caroline Armstrong, who is known to have a passion for new experiences and adrenalin-filled activities, from bungee jumping and quad racing to motor sports and gliding.

Having been in banking for more than 10 years, Caroline admits that taking on something as difficult as the Rhino Charge isn't a natural step. But she has been involved in the Quattro and Rhinoceros charges, and welcomes this new challenge.

'It is the experience of a lifetime. I am doing this with four incredible, powerful, generous women'

"The Rhino Charge is said to be the toughest off-road competition in the world, so I'm doing it because I need to conquer it. When I need to remind myself that I'm not crazy and that I'm doing this for a good reason, I remember that I get to have a gruelling, but fantastic day out in the most exotic parts of Kenya, while raising money for our environment and our country," she says.

After much hesitation about committing to action, a close friend of theirs jumped the gun and entered them himself for this year's event.

The two girls approached other go-getters: Elodie Sampere is currently the director of marketing for the African Wildlife Foundation in Nairobi. "It is the experience of a lifetime. I am doing it with four incredible, powerful,



The all-girl Pinks in Charge team. Clockwise from front right: Patricia, Elodie, navigator/co-team leader Mary-Ann, Linda and driver/co-team leader Caroline.



generous women," she says, "and I'm up to the challenge. I'm a conservationist and proud of the fact that all money raised goes to Rhino Ark."

Patricia Wena who, at "30-something", is a sporty, fun-loving woman, says she enjoys mental and physical challenges. She has always wanted to be involved in the Rhino Charge, and is keen to raise money for a worthy cause.

The last team member, Linda Karuru, is a TV producer with Sounds and Pictures in Nairobi. Linda admits that through the years, she has always been a spectator. When she was asked to join the Pinks in Charge, she didn't hesitate. "I have always wanted to participate, but I never found a team that needed someone like me," says Linda.

Linda has been a member of the East Africa Motor Sports Club for several years and, in 2008, she was elected to be a member of their board.

The team vehicle is being modified by Glenn Mathews of Four Wheel Drive. He's a veteran rally driver who is also training the team on maintenance and extreme driving.

Good luck from *Twende!* 📱