

YWAMer Carries Olympic Flame, Shares Jesus

As hundreds of young men and women arrived in Harpenden, England for YWAM's Olympic outreach, some of them had the chance to meet James Swabey.

Swabey, a 22-year-old **YWAM** worker from Sussex, England, had the opportunity to run with the Olympic Torch on its journey to London. Swabey was one of 8,000 people chosen by the London 2012 Organizing Committee to carry the Olympic flame as it traveled around the United Kingdom. The torchbearers were selected for their inspirational stories or for influential work in their community.

Swabey was chosen after he won a competition organized by Coca-Cola. He explains, "Coca-Cola put out an announcement asking for nominations of people who are using sports in their community to inspire young people or make a difference." A YWAM co-worker nominated James for his sports ministry work in Uganda, China, Rwanda and around the UK. To his surprise, Coca-Cola asked him to write his vision for sports and to tell them his story.

"I **prayed** about what to write, and felt God say to be honest about my relationship with Jesus and my desire to see people know Jesus and be transformed by Him through the tool of sports," he says. "I knew it might not be very popular, but I just left it in God's hands."

One of the main responsibilities Coca-Cola has given Swabey as a sponsored torchbearer is to share his story with local media and in local schools.

"It is so exciting. I am getting paid to share my testimony!" he says. "I get to talk about how I played sports all my life and that never fulfilled me, but life with Jesus has. I get to

talk about the times of going into Uganda and Rwanda and starting up basketball programs and running football camps. I get to talk about how many people were healed and how many people through these clubs and events heard about the hope in Jesus.”

On July 18, Swabey, clad in the official white Olympic torchbearer’s clothing, got his chance to run with the flame. He jogged for 300 meters past the crowds gathered along the waterfront and shopping areas of Eastbourne, a town in the south of England.

“It was an honor to be able to carry the Olympic flame,” he says. “Not just the implications of being a part of the relay and festivities, but because I believe the torch is a representation of hope and restoration. For me, it was symbolic of God’s heart to see those things among the nations, and confirmation that I can be a part of carrying it to the world.”

From July 24-September 10, approximately 2,500 people from 40 nations will participate in Olympic outreaches across the United Kingdom. Of these, roughly half will come through YWAM-sponsored initiatives.