Crossing the Desert for Cancer

Jon M. Huntsman School of Business alumnus Kaden Comadena (BA ’10) has taken the challenge to ‘dare mighty things’ seriously. The International Business graduate recently completed the Marathon des Sables. A six day, 159-mile race across the Sahara Desert that is commonly known as the “toughest footrace on earth”. Comadena not only completed a major physical feat but found a way to give back. As he ran across the desert, Comadena raised money for cancer research for the Huntsman Cancer Institute.

Comadena remarked, “I will always be grateful to Jon Huntsman. I was the beneficiary of his generosity due to programs and travel experiences that were created by his donations to the Huntsman School of Business. I was happy to raise a bit of money for the Huntsman Cancer Institute during the race.”

Comadena described the race as incredibly grueling. “We endured 115 degree days, sandstorms, blisters, snakes, and whatever else the Sahara Desert could throw at us,” he says. “However, without doubt the biggest challenge occurred during stage 4. We had to travel 52 miles that included crossing deep sand dunes, and literally climbing a mountain. It took me 23 hours to complete, and I nearly fell asleep on my feet several times. I have never felt so exhausted as when I crossed the finish line. The exhaustion was only matched by my satisfaction of completing the most difficult physical test I’d ever faced.”

When he’s not out running, Comadena works alongside several other Aggie alumni at MyEducator, an educational technology company that provides online learning resources for both academic institutions and corporations. Comadena’s participation in student clubs, the SEED program, and Huntsman Scholars prepared him to develop and work for a young company that conducts business throughout the world.
“During my time at the Huntsman School I was able to travel to Europe, Asia, and Africa. The emphasis on having a global vision at the Huntsman School prepared me to create meaningful relationships with people from different cultures and lifestyles.”

Even though he is still trying to adjust back to life outside of the Sahara, Comadena says he has no plans to slow down. “Whatever my next adventure is, I’m sure it will involve international travel. I’ve thought about walking the Camino de Santiago or the Inca Trail. Both seem to be less intense and more enjoyable than running 160 miles in the Sahara Desert!”