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'Power dash for cash'

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A team of former Plymouth students is gearing itself up for a 1,500-mile charity dash across Europe. The three University of Plymouth graduates, and a friend, are taking part in the first Student Gumball Rally, which involves more than 150 teams from across the country. Rob Blackler, 23, from Plymouth, has enlisted the help of his former university mates Benjamin Williams, 22, and Simon Gibbons, 23, who all graduated from Plymouth University last year, plus mutual friend Alex Purcell, 23, to help raise funds for St Luke's Hospice in Plymouth. The rally is based on the event launched by eccentric millionaire Maximilian Cooper in 1999. He invited 50 of his most eccentric friends to take part in a six-day, 3,000-mile drive around Europe, partying each night. The Plymouth team have called themselves The Bogus Mexicans and are hoping to raise more than £1,000 for the hospice. So far, the team has secured sponsorship from Kellogg's, which has agreed to double every donation up to a £1,000 limit. The team's racing car, a VW Passat, is being sponsored by VW Lister of Coventry, with Yacht Havens Ltd and Limbrick Ltd. Rob said: "When we heard about the rally, we just thought it sounded crazy, but we decided we had to get involved. Not only will we be racing across Europe in six days, we'll also be raising money for a charity." "We really want to go all the way and have a great time and raise as much money as we can for such a good cause." The teams will race from Dover to Croatia in just six days, starting on Sunday, September 3. Their journey will take them through France, Belgium, and Holland and into Germany for an overnight stop. Companies or individuals wishing to support the team can contact Rob on info@thebogusmexicans.co.uk or donate via the justgiving website www.justgiving.com/Gumballrally