

Robe 'Hearts' Northampton

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Robe UK followed the current Covid-19 instructions to “stay local”, teaming up with Northampton School for Boys (NSB), the University of Northampton and DroneSwarm based nearby in Daventry to support #LightItInRed’s most recent campaign to unite the UK live events, entertainment, performance, and production industry in solidarity during these challenging times.

The call was to light buildings, structures, places, and spaces in red throughout the week of March.

The action featured a new distinctive red heart logo designed by the #LightItInRed team for the occasion that – one year on – specifically highlighted the human elements of the industry affected by the pandemic – including those still working or training, those who have had to seek alternative employment, those who've lost their jobs, those who have lost friends and family, those who have lost homes and livelihoods, battled mental health issues and all who have put their lives on hold and on the line to survive and assist others to get through this.

Theresa Gibson, head of marketing at Robe UK explained that having been involved in all three LightItInRed campaigns to date, “it was really important for Robe UK to get behind supporting this fourth activation. We have all been affected by the challenges and difficulties over the last 12 months and having the opportunity to partner with our friends at DroneSwarm and the University of Northampton again to collaborate and show our strength as a united force was truly wonderful!”

Working in the extensive sports grounds and facilities of Northampton School *for* Boys (founded 1541), Robe's lead creative Nathan Wan assisted by Jordan Tinniswood added some dramatic beam lighting effects to a spectacular 100-metre wide, 83-metre-tall heart shape which was created by 40 x small illuminated drones.

Three Robe MegaPointes were chosen – for their power and impact – to complete this piece of lighting art.

DroneSwarm is an eye-catching visual concept created by Mat Lawrence and his team – he also heads laser and pyro specialists MLE Pyrotechnics.

Each aircraft can carry an LED light or pyro effects, and utilizing proprietary DroneSwarm software, the swarm can create amazing, fluid, and elegant airborne displays for all types of events – from trade shows and brand activations to weddings and parties.

Creating the heart shape needed some ultra-precise programming to ensure each point / drone was position-perfect, but the results were super cool.

Northampton School *for* Boys headmaster Richard Bernard commented, “NSB was delighted to play host to such an exhilarating ‘Light it in Red’ event which fired up the skies above the school playing fields. The impressive drone formation was both moving and a triumph of technology, conveying a hugely powerful message of support for the live event industry and the NHS across the Northampton skyline. A fantastic evening of entertainment and reflection!

Theresa followed up in expressing gratitude to Northampton School *for* Boys ... “and also to assistant headmaster Richard Murphy on the evening for facilitating the space required to stage the stunning drone swarm light creation specially designed by Mat’s team.”

“The heart embraced by the Robe MegaPointes was a spectacular sight across the skies of Northampton shining as a beacon of love, light, hope and positivity to everyone in the industry!” stated Theresa with passion.

In addition to the drone heart, Robe UK once again arranged a collaboration with the University as they had for the first national #LightItInRed campaign action in July last year.



The #LightItInRed, NSB, DroneSwarm and Robe logos were displayed on a large plasma screen on the University’s Waterside Campus 26-metre-high media tower, together with a rolling collection of custom graphics incorporating the #LightItInRed heart and #WeMakeEvents logos complete with industry supporting taglines produced by students from the BA Events Management course.

Says Theresa, “It was great to also engage the Event Management degree students who supported the campaign with personal and powerful messages which were highly visible across the town.”

Claire Leer, senior lecturer in Events Management and Tourism, commented, “The University of Northampton is proud to stand with the events sector and #LightItInRed to shed light on the impact of the pandemic.



“We’re in a period of unprecedented seismic change for the events sector, but it is heartening to see the way the sector can unite, and creatively respond to the Covid challenge. Our students, and graduates, will be at the heart of the way the industry bounces back from what has been an extremely challenging year.”

Theresa concluded, “We are so proud to continue supporting the incredible work that the Light It In Red and We Make Events campaign teams have generated and delivered over this last year, and all the awesome industry people and beyond who have dedicated their time to make so much happen ... which has been most heartfelt and humbling”.

Photos: Louise Stickland