



Life Saver Ministries
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October 2017

Dear Life Savers,

I said last year that I wouldn't do it again, but our bills were piling up and a year's time had dulled my memory, so I decided to try the 100 Mile One Man Walk-A-Thon once again.

I started increasing my daily walking distances to get ready. I went to a podiatrist to get my feet checked out and get some advice on blister prevention. He gave me some gel toe-covers to put on my big toes, told me to use moleskin and get some shoes that gave my toes more room. Then he said, "Nobody can walk 100 miles without getting blisters."

I bought a couple of pairs of size 12-Wide sneakers, some moleskin, duct tape, and a bunch of Band-Aids. I had learned a few lessons about blister prevention and care from last year's walk. I put the toe-covers on my big toes, strategically stuck moleskin, duct tape, and Band-Aids on areas of my feet that had blistered last year, and smeared Vaseline on all my toes. I was ready.

I started out on Sunday morning. The weather forecast was for showers in the afternoon. I figured I could get away without rain gear in the morning. Both the forecast and I were wrong. I got soaked. It was a hot and humid the rest of the day, much more like a day in August than October. I chose October for this walk for a reason. Maybe because of the heat, maybe I wasn't in as good a shape as last year, but for whatever reason, it seemed much harder this year. Even with my preparation, I got a couple of blisters on the first day. I did manage to walk just over 16 miles, though.

Monday, it rained most of the day. Did I say rained? It poured. I did wear rain gear, but that just made it hotter. I only managed to get in 8½ miles.

Tuesday was another hot muggy day. I hadn't slept well. I was tired and unmotivated. I pushed myself and managed to get in 3 walks for a total of 14½ miles. When I got home, I was so tired and my feet hurt so badly, I told Cathie I was giving up. I couldn't do it this year. I quit. Cathie was relieved, because she saw how much the hot weather was taking out of me. She asked me how disappointed I was. I said, "Very."

Wednesday morning, I changed my mind. I have never liked quitting. I told Cathie I was going to continue. I didn't think I could reach my goal of 100 miles, but I was going to get as far as I could. She was not thrilled with my decision, but understood why I made it.

I decided to drive to Arlington, where I grew up, and walk around my old neighborhood. That was fun, and it lifted my spirits. Driving there and back killed 2 hours of my day, though, so I only managed 2 walks for just over 11 miles. I knew I was falling farther behind and would never make it to 100 miles, but I was still walking. I was right at about 50 miles.

Thursday was a much cooler day. I had a bunch of blisters on my feet by now, but was feeling much better in general. Just like last year, I found that the pain in my feet lessened after about a mile of walking. I got 3 walks in for a total of almost 17 miles. That brought me up to 67 miles, with 2 days to go. I was beginning to think that maybe I could reach 100 miles after all. It would take 2 very long days, but if my feet held out...maybe.

Friday was another cool day. I pushed myself and had my best day with 18¼ miles. I was within striking distance of my goal. I thought I might actually make it.

I started Saturday at first light, because I figured I needed to get 4 walks in before it got dark, and it gets dark early at this time of year. Critters come out after dark. I didn't want to meet up with a skunk.

I got 3 walks in, totaling 16½ miles by 4:30. I figured I had another 4 miles to go to reach 100. I really didn't want to walk any more miles than I had to, so I asked Cathie to total up how far I had already walked. She got out a calculator and started adding.

Cathie finished adding and said, “The total is 102.32.” I said, “That can’t be right, do it again.” She added again and said, “Yup, 102.32. It looks like you’re done.” I was never so happy to have mentally added incorrectly.

My grandson, Brian, was at my house, because he wanted to celebrate with me when I finished. He ran outside to tell his mom, shouting, “Papa, did it. He already walked 102 miles. He doesn’t need to do another walk.” We both celebrated in the back yard, dancing around and giving each other high fives.

I’m going to end this letter with the same words I used to end last year’s letter about the walk.

I want to thank all the wonderful people who pledged an amount per mile or a flat amount for my Walk-a-Thon, to help support the young mothers and children at My Father’s House. I appreciate you more than you can know.

Although this started out as a fundraiser, and I did reach my goal by raising more than \$10,000 for My Father’s House, the money is not what kept me from quitting every time I wanted to quit. (Actually, I didn’t reach my \$10,000 goal this year. I don’t have a total yet, but it looks to be around \$9,000.)

I didn’t quit (I did, but then I unquit) because I wanted to set an example for the young moms at My Father’s House. Often, when one of our residents complains about the rules, or the chores, or the classes, or going to school, or anything else in our program, I or another staff person will ask them, “What are you willing to do to make a better life for yourself and your child?”

Quite often young women are here as a requirement to regain custody of their children from the DCF. The question then becomes, “What are you willing to do to get your child back?”

I wanted to be able to give them a concrete example of what I am willing to do to enable them and their children to have a better life. I wanted to show them that I am willing to walk a hundred miles on bloody feet (no blood, just a bunch of blisters and one black toe this year), so that they and their children will have a comfortable place to live and a caring staff of loving people to help and teach them.

I also wanted to be able to show them that there are a lot of great people, who don’t even know them and will probably never meet them or their children, yet who are willing to give their hard earned money to give them a chance for a better life.

I hope I don’t sound as if I’m boasting, although my arm is a little sore from patting myself on the back. That’s not my intent. I know there are many people who do a lot more than I have ever done or will ever do.

Oh, yeah. I’m not doing this again.



I know you’d rather see pictures of cute babies, but here are my feet during a rest between walks.

In His service,

Kevin
Kevin Coffey

Celebrating with Brian.

