

September 14th, 2017

CANBERRA MAN WALKS 1900 KM ACROSS AFRICAN DESERT FOR CHARITY

Walking thousands of kilometres alone in an African desert, with nothing but a soccer ball and an iPod for company, is something that few of us would contemplate. Canberra adventurer and Caritas Australia supporter, Matt Napier, however, did exactly that, walking thousands of kilometres to raise money for those living in poverty.

During the 1900 kilometre walk across the Namib Desert, from the south of Namibia to Angola, Matt tackled 250 metre high sand dunes, isolation and threats from wildlife, including lions. Along the way, Matt's wife Wendy played a supporting role, driving a backup vehicle, preparing meals and when needed treating Matt's blisters.

Over \$20,000 raised by the walk will go to help support Caritas Australia's Integrated Community Development program in Zimbabwe. The three - year program assists some of the country's most vulnerable people to access clean water and sanitation and to enhance their food security.

"For my wife and I giving back makes us feel much better on the inside as individuals," Matt said.

"I think as human beings, it shouldn't matter where we're born, we should all be given the basics in life, which include food, water, shelter, healthcare and education. For me this was an opportunity to make a difference."

During the walk, Matt and his wife Wendy distributed several hundred soccer balls to children who they meet along the way.

"I believe that sport really helps to break down the barriers between people. We can't speak their language, but we can all speak the language of sport," Matt said.

For Matt the walk was also an opportunity to raise awareness of the ongoing humanitarian crisis in parts of East Africa and Yemen.

"The United Nations estimates that 23 million people across East Africa and Yemen are now on the brink of famine. With 1.4 million children at the risk of death in the region, this is the gravest food security threat that Africa has faced since the 1984 famine that devastated Ethiopia," Matt said.

Caritas Australia, through its membership of one of the largest humanitarian networks in the world, Caritas Internationalis, has assisted more than half a million people to access clean water and food.

To learn more about Caritas Australia or to make a donation visit: www.caritas.org.au or phone 1800 024 413.

To learn more about Matt Napier visit: www.walktoabetterworld.com/

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