



Life Saver Ministries
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Dear Life Savers,

Last month, I told you about my 2 favorite childhood books, Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel and The Little Engine that Could. When I was about to start my One Man Walk-a-Thon, I felt a little bit like the Little Engine that Could, because I kind of thought I could, and a little more like Mike Mulligan, because I had my doubts, but decided to give it a try anyway, and a lot like the engine that looked “very old and tired” that said, “I’m so tired. I must rest my weary wheels. I can not. I can not. I can not.”

I almost postponed starting the walk for a couple of weeks, because I had injured my right foot and it hadn’t completely stopped hurting. Since the weather forecast for the week looked good, and I didn’t know how long the nice weather would last, I decided to go for it.

The first day went well. I managed to walk just over 17 miles, consisting of 4 walks with periods of rest in between. I was feeling more confident that I might actually be able to do this.

On the second day, bolstered with confidence from the day before, I decided to try one longer walk of about 10 miles and a couple of short ones. That was a mistake. I planned to walk 5 miles, then turn around and walk back to my truck. When I got to almost 4 miles I could feel blisters forming on my feet. I should have stopped and taken precautions to prevent the blisters from getting worse, but I had no way to get back to my truck except to walk.

When I got home and removed my shoes and socks, I saw big blisters on the insteps and toes of both feet. I almost gave up right then. Instead, I covered the blisters on my insteps and big toes with duct tape, put band aids and liquid bandage on the ones on smaller toes, and put duct tape on a couple of other areas to hopefully prevent more blisters from forming. That worked pretty well. I finished day 2 with 16 miles.

Day 3 consisted of 4 shorter walks for a total of almost 16 miles and only one additional blister. On day 4, I took it a little easier, because my feet were hurting quite a bit and had started bleeding. I managed just under 14 miles.

I think day 5 was the most difficult. My feet were pretty beat up and still bleeding. Removing the duct tape so I could wash my feet every day was painful, because it pulled on the blisters. My feet were swollen, so my blistered toes were constantly pressed against the inside of my shoes. I still had almost 40 miles to go.

On the first mile of each walk, I must have looked like I needed a walker, as I limped along, but as I progressed, the pain lessened and I could walk more normally. By mile 3, I felt pretty good, and for the rest of the walk I wasn’t constantly thinking about my feet. I got in 3 walks totaling just under 16 miles.

On day six, my luck with the weather gave out. It was rainy, windy, and raw. I couldn’t skip it, because I would have had too many miles to walk on day 7. So, I taped up my feet, put on a rain jacket, and headed out. I got in a couple of 6+ mile walks on the rail trail. In the morning, there were more runners out than I expected to see and a few bicyclists. In the afternoon, I was the only one there. I guess everyone else was home watching the Pats.

On day 7, I only had 9+ miles to go. I did a walk on the rail trail in the morning, and Cathie joined me for my last few miles on some roads near home. I had a nice greeting from my kids and grandkids, complete with signs of congratulations, when I reached home.

I’d like to say that throughout the entire week I said, “I think I can. I think I can. I think I can.” And finished saying, “I thought I could. I thought I could. I thought I could.” That wouldn’t be true, because I didn’t think I could, and I almost quit...almost every day.

Whose bright idea was this, anyway?

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.

I also want to thank John Emery and Chuck Chaney of Emery Creative for making that "award winning" video to promote the Walk-a-Thon. Great job. You can still see the video at www.onemanwalkathon.com, in case you missed it.

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.

I didn't quit 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, 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.

The Walk-a-Thon wasn't all bad. The weather was great, the scenery and fall colors were beautiful. I got some much needed exercise, and, hopefully, I will continue to walk once my blisters heal.

I know you'd rather see pictures of cute babies, but here's my duct taped foot.



My welcoming committee.

In His service,
Kevin
Kevin Coffey