

Palgrave resident on a mission to aid CF

Written By MIKE BAKER

Palgrave resident Jim Eberly has never been one to do things the easy way.

It has been 25 years since he raised \$33,000 for Cystic Fibrosis through his incredible 'Trek to Timmins' initiative. The more than 800-kilometre adventure, topped up by an excursion around the east side of Lake Simcoe, took more than a month to complete. Looking back, Jim remembers those long, difficult days with a smile.

'I've been called crazy before for some of the things I've done, and I'll be called crazy again,' Eberly said.

Sharing his story, Jim, a long-time proud member of the Kin Canada organization, has been an advocate for Cystic Fibrosis for more than 30 years. The genetic disorder affects approximately one in every 3,000 people and mostly impacts the lungs, pancreas, liver, kidneys and intestines.

More than two decades on and Jim is still walking, and raising money, for Cystic Fibrosis. Last summer he had intended to complete a 230-kilometre 'West Coast

Walk,' traveling along Lake Huron from Sarnia to Southampton. The jaunt was to raise money for Cystic Fibrosis and Headwaters Health Care Centre, but was cut short due to safety issues.

'I couldn't get the approval I needed to complete the walk in an official capacity, so I did a virtual walk,' Eberly said, by walking sideroads in Caledon and Simcoe tracking his distance on his Fitbit. 'It wasn't ideal, but I still did it.'

The last day was spent walking from Southampton to Kincardine.

Jim is back at it again. He spent 10 days earlier in March walking Highway 9 between Orangeville and Newmarket, picking up empty pop and beer cans littered along the side of the road.

He spent between four to five hours per day completing the walk, which he estimates to have been approximately 120 kilometres. In total, he collected more than 1,500 cans, filling 12 gigantic plastic bags with garbage over the course of the 10 days.

'I found out that 50 pounds of empty pop cans is worth \$16,' Jim said. 'I have another \$110 in beer cans and bottles that I will be redeeming too. All money to go towards Cystic Fibrosis.'

Expecting to raise in the region of \$150, Mr. Eberly says he has found two people from the local community willing to match that amount - taking his overall total to \$300.

Following his Orangeville to Newmarket trip, Jim immediately started on another adventure - walking the Caledon King Townline.

'I just started with this walk, but I'll probably be doing something similar to what I did along Highway 9 - picking up empties and recycling,' Jim said.

If you get the sense that these smaller excursions are leading to another ambitious project, you would be correct. Eberly confirmed he is actively planning a walk that would cover the length of Highway 9 - starting in Newmarket and concluding in Kincardine, some 200-kilometres away. Not content with a one-way journey, Jim plans to book a return trip, taking the overall distance to 400-kilometres.

'I'm on a mission,' Jim proudly exclaimed. 'This is a personal passion of mine.'

I've seen the horrific effects Cystic Fibrosis can have on a human being. It's devastating. Since we don't have a day of KINdness this year, I've decided I'm going to try and complete this walk and I'll collect money to help our cause.

Kin has been fundraising for Cystic Fibrosis since 1964. It's a cause that is very close to my heart.'

Addressing concerns that his walk could, once again, be blocked by authorities,

Jim said he won't make the same mistake he did last year.

'It's unfortunate, but I can't do what I did in 1994 anymore. I had an idea, presented it to people and moved forward. We can't do that now,' Jim said. 'Now,

I'm just going to do this personally. Nobody can stop me from walking down the side of the road with my Kin safety vest on.'

He is issuing a community challenge, to see if he can raise \$1 for every kilometre walked, for a total of \$400. He is also seeking corporate support in an attempt to find an organization willing to match whatever money he raises through collecting pop and beer cans.

'Kin Kilometres for Loonies & Toonies I'm calling it. It's healthy and for a good cause, so I'm looking forward to it,' Eberly said.

Donations can be made by contacting Kin Jim at 647-746-1940, or

jimeberly49@gmail.com.