Professor, 67, to walk 185 miles from Manchester to Walsingham for charity

Friday 7 June, 2024

A University of Bolton psychology professor is to take on the monumental task of walking 185 miles in just seven days at the age of 67 to raise money for children's mental health.

Professor Jerome Carson plans to walk from Manchester to the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham in Norfolk from Saturday July 20 to Saturday July 27.

The purpose of this sponsored walk is twofold. Firstly, it is to raise money for the Hummingbird Project. Delivered by children's charity MedEquip4Kids, this six-week course based on positive psychology aims to improve the mental wellbeing of children in both primary and secondary schools.

Secondly, it will be a spiritual journey. Jerome, who attends the Catholic Church of the Holy Infant and St. Anthony in Astley Bridge, Bolton, has never completed a pilgrimage before and he will be walking alone. It will pose a significant challenge for Jerome, who has never walked more than 20 miles in a day.

Walsingham is the site of the main Marian shrine in England, which dates back to 1061 and is venerated by both Anglicans and Catholics. Jerome will be walking to the Slipper Chapel. Pilgrims walk the last mile barefooted and Jerome will be honouring this tradition.

The Hummingbird Project is a unique partnership between the Manchester-based children's charity, MedEquip4Kids, the University of Bolton, the University of Chester and the Open University.

The young people complete questionnaires before and after the six-week course, and results are showing significant improvements in wellbeing and levels of hope and reductions in mental health symptoms.

So far nearly 6,000 school pupils in primary and secondary schools have benefitted from the Hummingbird Project in Greater Manchester, Cheshire and Merseyside. It is hoped that the project will be rolled out nationally and internationally.

Professor Carson said: "Rising problems in children's mental health have been an increasing concern over the last decade and especially since the pandemic.

"The Hummingbird Project incorporates the latest research from positive psychology to improve young people's wellbeing, help them thrive and get the most out of life. We want to roll out the benefits to thousands more.

"I have two months to prepare myself for walking about 25 miles a day. The last day will be the shortest in terms of distance. As I am now 67, I wanted to give something back.

"We owe it to our children to give them the best possible start in life. I hope to raise thousands of pounds to help improve young people's mental health."

To make a donation, please visit Jerome's Just Giving page – Jerome Carson is fundraising for MedEquip4Kids (justgiving.com). A gift of £50 pays for one young person to receive the Hummingbird Project course.

Media:









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