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12-YEAR-OLD ZACH BONNER TO CONCLUDE NEARLY 2500-MILE “MARCH ACROSS AMERICA” IN LOS ANGELES ON SEPTEMBER 14

Santa Monica, CA (September 14, 2010) – While most kids his age spent this past summer relaxing and socializing, twelve-year-old philanthropist Zach Bonner traveled close to 2500 miles by foot from the east coast of Florida to Los Angeles, seeking to raise awareness and funds for homeless children across America. After six months on the road, he is scheduled to end his coast-to-coast “March Across America” on Tuesday, September 14, at 3:15 p.m., when he arrives at the Santa Monica Pier to celebrate with family, friends and supporters, thousands of whom have been following his journey via AOL’s www.giveandglow.com, Twitter, and his own ZachTracker website.



“There’s an ancient Chinese proverb: ‘A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.’ Most people don’t walk a thousand miles, or 2500, but what it really means is that we all need to take that *first* step to get something big done. If I’ve helped even one homeless child, I hope I’ve accomplished that with my ‘March Across America.’” says Bonner, who has received the U.S. President’s Volunteer Service Award and been profiled on “The Early Show,” “Good Morning America” and recently The New York Times.

Bonner’s journey began on March 23. For the past six months, his route has taken him through Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, New Mexico, Arizona and California. To reach his goal, he had to endure everything from severe rain storms to 107-plus degree heat in the Southwest desert. While walking, he:

- Covered 17 to 22 miles a day on average;
- Went through 7 pairs of shoes, donated by Sanuk, New Balance, Sketchers and others;
- Visited homeless shelters and spoke to numerous schools, clubs, churches and other organizations, championing the cause of homeless children and explaining his mission to help;
- In Monroe, Louisiana, helped transform an old house into a new day-program house for Family Promise of Ouachita;
- In Shreveport, Louisiana, took a group of homeless teens to shop for back to school clothes and to the movies;
- In Dallas, took teens from Promise House to Six Flags Over Texas and to the library to read to them, donated over 100 backpacks filled with food and supplies, took a younger group of homeless youth to Build-A-Bear, and spent an afternoon helping feed the homeless on the streets;
- In Longview, Texas, took a group of 30 kids for a fun day including dinner and gave each a gift bag full of school supplies, personal hygiene items, books and toys
- In El Paso, worked with sponsor Office Depot Foundation, which donated 500 new children’s backpacks to the El Paso Coalition for the Homeless, the Child Crisis Center of El Paso, and the Sara McKnight Transitional Living Center of the YWCA of El Paso del Norte;
- In Tucson, attended a concert by Elton John, who donated \$50,000 to Zach’s charity, Little Red Wagon Foundation;

- In Phoenix, donated over 100 back-to-school backpacks filled with school supplies and personal hygiene articles and 2 Wii systems to homeless drop-in centers, took a couple of homeless kids to a Lady Gaga concert, 60 kids to the movies, and gave them gift bags provided by Variety: The Childrens Charity, took 8 kids back-to-school shopping at Target and bought 1,000 pairs of new socks for homeless youth;
- Joined Atlantic Records recording artist Cody Simpson at the Santa Monica pier for the end of Zach's walk.

Bonner's march was co-sponsored by Philanthropy Project, AOL/KOL, Lazydays, Little Red Wagon Foundation, and Office Depot Foundation, with additional support from Build-A-Bear Workshop, Caspers Company McDonald's, K12, and Outback Steakhouse/Carrabba's.

As part of its National Backpack Program, the Office Depot Foundation is donating 2,500 book bags – one for each mile Zach has walked – to the Little Red Wagon Foundation in honor of his remarkable achievement and commitment to serving others.

In 2004, in the wake of Hurricane Charley, then six-year-old Zach Bonner used his red wagon to gather water and supplies for storm victims. The next year he founded the Tampa-based nonprofit Little Red Wagon Foundation (www.littleredwagonfoundation.com) to help distressed and underprivileged kids and to encourage youth to make a difference in their own neighborhoods. In Fall 2007, Zach began a 1,225-mile-long "My House to the White House" walk, on behalf of the 1.3 million homeless youth in America and youth volunteerism generally, by walking from his hometown of Tampa to Tallahassee. The next fall he continued the journey by walking from Tallahassee to Atlanta and, in summer 2009, completed the effort by walking from Atlanta to Washington, DC, where he met with U.S. Senators and Representatives.

One of Bonner's sponsors, Philanthropy Project (www.giveandglow), recently wrapped production on a feature film, *Little Red Wagon*, inspired by Bonner's life story. The film, produced by Michael Guillen and David Kanter, written by Patrick Sheane Duncan (*Mr. Holland's Opus*) and directed by David Anspaugh (*Rudy*, *Hoosiers*), stars Chandler Canterbury, Anna Gunn, Frances O'Connor, Dylan Matzke and Daveigh Chase.

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