

THE LAND Magazine

Moree charity walkers, Harvey Gaynor and Toni Munro, walked 110 kilometres last month to raise \$10,000 for an agricultural program which will support a village in Uganda.



Inspired trek

BY CADY ANDERSEN

AFTER more than 200,000 steps and an exhausting 25 hours, two Moree residents have helped raise more than \$10,000 towards an agricultural program in Uganda.

Harvey Gaynor and Toni Munro set off on their 110-kilometre trek from Narrabri to Moree last month to raise funds for the One Village charity, which assists the villagers of Namwendwa to develop self-sufficiency.

Harvey, general manager for Auscott Limited in the Gwydir Valley, said he was inspired to help One Village after hearing the charity's founder, Nikki Lovell, speak earlier this year.

"I often thought it would be a good project, but I needed to find the right excuse," he said.

A few months ago, after speaking with local businesswoman, Toni, plans for the fundraiser became "serious".

Having completed the 100km Oxfam Trailwalker with Toni in the past, Harvey knew

he could rely on her to provide support by joining him on the walk.

With a support crew of friends and family on-board the pair set off from Narrabri along the Wee Waa road through to Millie and then on to Moree.

Many of the crew also took part along different sections of the hike.

Toni's 14-year-old daughter, Sarah, made a "brave effort" and walked about 75km at the start of the trek and a further 10km at the end.

Harvey said everybody got through intact, aside from the expected blisters and sore muscles.

"There was plenty of support from the crew keeping the food and drinks up to us and we had a few training walks

of varying lengths leading up to the event," he said.

"I think the only thing that may have caught us out was the different road surfaces – we had done a lot on black soil, but the bitumen and gravel gave us a bit of a challenge.

"I think it was a case of mind over body."

The pair carried buckets for donations made

by motorists on the way which were also handed around at the local rugby union game – the finishing point for the trek.

"We got a lot of sponsorship from family and friends, as well as corporate sponsorship too, and there is still money coming in which is fantastic," Harvey said.

"The reason I chose One Village is because it's like the old philosophy of 'teach a man to fish and he can feed himself for life'.

"Rather than supporting a charity that just hands food to somebody I hope these people are able to look after themselves better in the future by learning about agriculture, and the beauty about One Village is it targets one place rather than trying to change the world." Harvey hasn't ruled out another trek in the future.

"There was a lot of talk along the way so I'm sure there will be a next time," he said.

"There have been a lot of offers and inquiries from family and friends so hopefully it will be bigger and better next year, but I think we'll just let the mind and body get over this first."

One Village in Namwendwa

- The agriculture program at Namwendwa Primary was established in 2008 and aims to educate the students about growing food and the importance of nutrition and variety in their diet, and through hands-on practice, effective farming techniques
 - In addition to the food crops, such as sweet potato, oranges, peas and beans, many trees have been planted around the school including trees for shade and hardwood trees with a view to selling the wood
 - It is hoped in the future there will be a surplus of produce which can be sold, so the village becomes self-sufficient
- Visit www.onevillage.org.au/about-namwendwa/ for more details.