

Lions support the dogs that support us



By Kristena Schutt-Moore

Every year the Bancroft Lion's Club joins Lion's Clubs across Canada to walk a mile in the paw prints of those who support others living with disabilities, and they are not stopping now. The Pet Valu Walk For Dog Guides will be virtual this year and organizer of the Bancroft walk and volunteer dog guide puppy trainer Laverne Stapley is inviting people to find their own unique way to help guide dogs help others.

The dogs trained under the Lion's Foundation of Canada are provided as guide dogs at no cost to those in need. There are a variety of different types of dog guides trained under the Lions Foundation of Canada including canine vision, hearing, general service which helps those with mobility issues, seizure response, autism assistance and diabetic alert. A brand new kind of dog guide is facility support, which is when a dog works in a service with the OPP or fire department or other first responders to support those who have been through a traumatic event.

Those interested in participating in the walk can register at the event's website www.walkfordogguides.com and register themselves, a team, or join Stapley's team under the Bancroft walk's location. The main walk is traditionally held on May. 30, now that it has gone online participants can walk as much as they want as often as they want leading up to the main day. The goal for this year's walk throughout Canada is \$1,300,000 and to virtually walk across Canada.

The virtual walk starts off at Canada's most easterly point, Cape Spear in Newfoundland and crosses the finish line in Mt. St. Elias in the Yukon, a total of 5,514 kilometres. So far participants have walked 25,563 kilometres. That means they have already virtually circled Canada 4.6 times.

Those who wish to walk across Canada can participate by connecting their Fitbit device, downloading the Strava or Map My Fitness App or manually logging the distance they travel to the website. Everything counts as participating as long as the 'walkers' get out and active- whether it is going for a walk or run with their own furry best friend, grabbing the bike to go for a ride, go on a wheelchair accessible trail, or dance around in the living room to the music on the radio.

Those who can't or don't want to participate in the walk but still would like to donate and help a dog earn its dog guide harness can log onto the website and hit the donation button or stop by Dairy Queen in Bancroft and give the donated to Stapley directly.