

Cancer survivor "going walkabout" for Gilda's Club

By Jake Courtepatte

Ruth Garrett walks for those that are faced with the same difficult path she traversed in 2013.

In September of that year, she was given the news that she had a stage 3 cancerous growth in her ovaries at Princess Margaret Hospital, knowing full well that her mother had died of breast cancer.

"On that day I decided I didn't need to fight the cancerous growth. I needed to work with it to unravel any and all emotional scars propagating its existence."

Cancer-free in 2015, Garrett has been given the chance to give back.

Beginning on the first of August, Garrett has taken the first steps in a 500-kilometre journey with the hopes of raising at least \$50,000 for Gilda's Club Greater Toronto and Gilda's Club Simcoe-Muskoka. It's a place of emotional support for anyone living with cancer, as well as their family and friends affected by the disease.

"Mental support is all but forgotten sometimes when it comes to your health," said Garrett. "But, as much as we need support physically within our bodies, we also need support emotionally. Something like cancer takes a huge toll on not only the person, but their family, and most people don't know how to cope with such a thing."

Gilda's Club does not receive any direct government funding.

Aside from raising funds, Garrett says the walk is about awareness, to bring to light the need for emotional support for cancer patients and their families.

On August 24, a Monday, Garrett will be on her third leg of the marathon walk when she travels from Aurora to Bradford, approximately a four-hour journey. It will be the third last day of her walk, as she plans to arrive in Barrie two days later.

"It's exhausting but so fulfilling," said Garrett after a few days into her journey. "I'm taking a few pit stops a day?everyone has been so welcoming so far."

Long distance walking is nothing new to Garrett. In 2006, she walked 760 kilometres along the Camino de Santiago in northern Spain to raise money and awareness for the plight of women and children being trafficked in the sex trade.

"Walking is a release, and I enjoy it. To use it to raise money for a cause I care about is what makes me happy."

She is also no stranger to self-discovery. Garrett is the author of five books on subjects such as resilience, creating the life you desire, emotional intelligence, self-discovery and having effective difficult conversations.

To learn more about Garrett's trek, or to donate, go to www.goingwalkabout2015.com.