

Chris Jones Embarks on an Epic 7,000-Mile Journey to Raise £100,000 for Mental Health Charity

UNITED KINGDOM, October 3, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Chris Jones, an inspiring adventurer and dedicated Freemason, embarked on a remarkable journey on New Year's Day, with a mission to walk 7,000 miles around the entire coastline of Great Britain. This challenging trip aims to raise £100,000 for charity to support mental health initiatives.

Mr. Jones's epic 18-month challenge spans the picturesque landscapes of the British coastline. Along his path, he welcomes donations from generous supporters, either in person or through the sale of a book he intends to write about his transformative journey. Chris is currently making his way through West Lancashire, with the entire adventure expected to last approximately 18 months.

With over five million steps, equivalent to roughly 2,150 miles covered, Chris has already raised more than £27,000. A Freemason under the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE) for over 12 years, Chris is determined and committed to make this fundraising endeavour one of the largest sums ever raised for the Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF) the Freemasons' Charity, by an individual. The raised money will be donated to mental health institutions.

Chris has a unique guideline for his journey: "So long as I can feel the sea breeze in my right ear, I'll know I'm on the right track." As a loyal Freemason, Chris Jones attributes much of his strength and determination to the support he has received from his Freemason friends. However, his journey is not just about personal resilience; it's about giving back to those who have helped him through his darkest hours.

During a period of mental health issues, Chris reached out to the MCF and their mental health helpline. Reflecting on this difficult moment, he stated, "I am convinced that MCF saved my life during my mental health crisis. I'm very open about my struggle with my mental health, and this is the main focus of this challenge. I have suffered for about 10 years, and the lowest points have cost me days and sometimes weeks of my life."

Despite varying daily distances of 10-25 miles, depending on weather and terrain, Chris is carrying his home in a 30kg backpack, using his tent for 80-90% of his journey to minimise costs. His wife, Michelle, joins him periodically to provide support, and kind-hearted individuals occasionally offer him a bed for the night, especially when the weather takes an unfriendly turn.

He has done minimal training. He kept himself reasonably fit by swimming, walking and using the gym around four times a week. Apart from a few short walks to check the fit of his kit, that's it.

"I am keeping costs down by living in my tent and purchasing rations from shops as I travel but the cost so far has far exceeded what I expected. My main focus still remains for people to contribute to the fundraiser but if anyone would like to assist me personally with my daily costs then the 'buy me a coffee' link allows people to make a small contribution. This will help me enormously to buy food and book onto campsites to get a shower and wash my clothes. I would be very grateful."

Les Hutchinson, Chief Executive of the Masonic Charitable Foundation, said: "All of us at MCF are hugely impressed with Chris' magnificent accomplishments so far on his epic journey. Mental health is a key priority for us and I'm delighted that every penny Chris raises will be helping people to get the support they need. We wish him the very best of luck on the rest of his journey."

Chris emphasises, "I'm encouraging others to join me for short sections of the walk, firstly to show off their part of our coastline, but more importantly, to talk to me about how they are beating their demons and controlling their mental health issues. This is about them and their battles, not me and mine, which I'm sure will have a mutual benefit."

Planning his route daily using maps on his phone or iPad, Chris stays connected with his loved ones, who track his progress and share his excitement. His granddaughter, 10-year-old Ava, uses the trip as a live geography project, plotting his course in school with her classmates.

As he continues to walk the British coastline, he inspires many people to reach out for help when needed and to support those in their battles against mental health challenges.

How people can help

*Donate to the MCF fundraiser. <https://bit.ly/3Cg32Jo>

* Help Chris personally by buying him a coffee: www.buymeacoffee.com/rbn6r6n7478

* If you live on the coast and have a garden or small piece of grass he could pitch his tent on to prevent him having to find wild camping pitches. If there is a shower he could use that would be amazing. Most campsites will be closing at the end of October and won't reopen until April 2024.

* Follow his progress on Social media and on his blog and spread the word:
<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=1601784864>

* Blog: www.walktheedge.mcf.com

About Chris Jones In 1999, Chris created and ran an Independent School offering education to 13-16 years olds from all over Lincolnshire that had been excluded from mainstream education. He employed 30-40 staff, many of whom were ex-police officers, soldiers and airmen. They focused on vocational skills training and over the 19-20 years helped just under 5,000 young people from all over Lincolnshire to move into the working world, many of them able to achieve and contribute to society after a bad start and often after being let down by an education system not geared up to deal with young people that just didn't fit.

"Every day I will write up the stories and by the end of the walk, hopefully, I will have enough content to write at least one book. Perhaps two; Masonic Lodges on the Coastline of our beautiful Kingdom and how walking, talking and listening can help to overcome struggles caused by our mental health."

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About the United Grand Lodge of England:

* The Premier Grand Lodge, which became the United Grand Lodge of England, was founded at the Goose and Gridiron Pub in London in 1717.

* It has 48 Provinces across the country and more than 7,000 Lodges, with students over the age of 18 able to join one of the 85 University Scheme Lodges.

* Freemasons use four important guiding principles to help define their path through life: integrity, friendship, respect and charity.

* One of the oldest social and charitable organisations in the world, Freemasonry's roots lie in the traditions of the medieval stonemasons who built our cathedrals and castles.

* Membership is open to people from all backgrounds and the organisation's aim is to empower members to be the best they can be – it's about building character, supporting members as individuals and helping them make a positive contribution to society.

* Freemasonry is one of the largest charitable givers in the country, contributing more than £51.1m to deserving causes in 2020 alone. Freemasons do not only donate money – more than 18.5 million hours of volunteer work were undertaken by Freemasons in 2018.

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