
talk about. It took them a couple of days, but everybody became excited about the marathon idea.

Even when we got into some heavy conversations, with some strong emotions my sister would bring the topic back to the marathon, and our spirits would pick up. So I guess it was not only important for me, but for every member of the family. We've dealt with a lot of things that hadn't been talked about for years. I never had a real relationship with my father up until this time, and now there's a lot of warmth and communication.

The planning for the marathon, or wheelchair-a-thon, took up a lot of our time and energy. We decided that I would wheel from The Pas to Winnipeg and back. That's a thousand miles roundtrip. There was so much to be done, organizing the route, getting sponsors, training, getting special equipment and, most important of all, enlisting the support of other disabled people and their sponsors. So it was a great exercise in management.

Our project was sponsored by the Pas Branch of the Manitoba League of the Physically Handicapped, right here in The Pas. And we received a

great deal of assistance and financial support from hundreds of people along the route. It gave us a chance to focus attention where it is most important, on the communities of the North, where there are many other disabled people requiring the kind of attention and help that I received from my family and friends. I really hoped, as momentum for the marathon increased, that I could create an awareness in the minds of many Canadians that there are disabled people all over this country, and that they have simple needs that everyone can respond to.

I was able to cover the thousand miles this past summer in fifty-six days, and I used up seven sets of wheels and twenty-two pairs of gloves along the way. Some parts of the trip were really painful and exhausting, and there were many times when I would have to drive myself on by thinking, "Just another mile, just one more mile." There are hundreds of memories I can think of, and we received a great deal of publicity, especially from the United States. So far, the project has received \$16,000 in pledges, and the money will go to the League for their work with disabled people.

Looking back, I'm happy for a lot of persons. I think that it was a challenge that has helped me to deal with my disability.

I'm also happy that the marathon has helped to focus public attention on the possibilities for improvement in the lives of disabled persons. When people get excited about doing something like the marathon, and they organize their efforts, there are very few things that can't be accomplished.

My life has changed a lot since my illness. I don't see many of my musician friends any more, but it's amazing how many old childhood friendships have started up again. There are people that I hadn't seen for ten years. My whole lifestyle and attitude toward life are much more positive. I'm only twenty-three, but I've already packed a lot of living into my life. I intend to pack a lot more into the years ahead.

“When people get excited about doing something like the marathon, and they organize their efforts, there are very few things that can't be accomplished.”

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