

May 6, 2017

HAPPY TRAILS FOR OXFAM

Occasionally in life you get the chance to achieve something extraordinary; that will inspire others and prove something to yourself. OXFAM Trailwalker is one of those rare opportunities and eight of our strongest (and possibly craziest) Wauchope Women have joined forces to undertake this epic journey together, ultimately to give people they will never meet the opportunity of a happy, healthy life. Helena Lawrie, Operations Manager at Bundaleer Care Services is one of those women.

1. Hi Helena. You and a group of seven other Wauchope-based women are entering the OXFAM Trailwalker 100km event in Sydney this August. Firstly, who are the women that will be taking part in the event?

We are a crazy bunch who live and work locally and together we make up two OXFAM Trailwalker teams. Our first team is "We thought you said RUM" and includes Leanne Parker, Manager of Wauchope Pharmacy, Jackie Craddock, Owner of Wauchope Pharmacy, Nancye Hughes, Executive Assistant Expressway Spares and myself.

Our second team is called "We thought you said RUM TOO" and includes Di Walsh, Teacher at St Joseph's Regional College, Ann Eggert, Business Partner at OxHill Organics, Coryl Reis, Centre Manager at TG's Child Care and Michelle Mullett, Head Chef at Wauchope RSL.

2. How do you all know each other and how did you all come up with the idea to take part in this event?

We have all known each other for years, so we already knew that we all had a passion for fitness but it was October last year when Parkrun Wauchope launched that the seed was planted to push ourselves beyond our 5km Saturday morning jog. Before we knew it we were pushing our boundaries in this ultimate fitness challenge!

3. What route will the Trailwalker take; what potential hazards/challenges do you foresee?

The 100km OXFAM Trailwalker begins at Parsley Bay, Brooklyn (a beautiful little town on the Central Coast of NSW) and finishes at Tania Park, Balgowlah (on the Northern Beaches of Sydney).

Challenge-wise I think because we have to start and finish as two teams of four it's the physical drive and mental strength that we need to overcome together to keep each other strong. It'll be tough, but apparently the feeling you get when you cross the finish line will be something you'll never forget!

4. What can you tell us about OXFAM itself (how does the organisation inspire you)? OXFAM is part of a global movement of people working hard to fight poverty. OXFAM Australia has been working with communities for over 60 years to providing the skills and resources to help people create their own solutions to overcome poverty by investing in long-term projects and campaigning for change.

OXFAM Trailwalker raises over \$6 million annually in Australia so we know that every donation we receive makes a significant difference to the lives of others and that's what drives every step we take.

5. What preparation/training have you and the ladies been doing in the lead up to the walk?

We have been in training now for 6 months and we are in training 6 days a week. We trek, we swim, we cycle, we run, we go to the gym. Sometimes we train together, sometimes we train apart – but we are always training and I can tell you that we are almost having too much fun.

Every bump and every bruise has its own story and some of them are hilarious – it certainly is an experience that we will never forget!

I remember one weekend seven of us were available to train so we headed off to Newcastle to take advantage of a killer sale at a specialist hiking store where we managed to spend over \$5000 on shoes, back packs, socks, hydration equipment and then had to figure out how to get it back to Wauchope in one car already crammed with 7 women. Then there are the fluoro pink sneakers worn to scare off the snakes and those online shoe purchases that are so comfy the owner wants to sleep in them.

I could go on for days, but all the funny stories and photos will be shared at our team fundraiser at the Wauchope RSL on May 13, 2017.

6. When the day of the walk dawns, what equipment/provisions are you allowed to take with you?

It is recommended that we each carry a 25 litre daypack containing a 3 litre water bladder with a drinking tube, walking poles, anti-chafing lotion, ID, money, event map in a protective pouch, plastic bags to store wet clothes, salty and sweet snacks, energy food and a good head torch. Between the team we need to have at least two phones (ideally on different networks), a first aid kit, spare batteries, painkillers and a walkers repair kit (shoelaces, string, safety pins etc).

7. In order to participate in the event, all teams must fundraise a minimum amount of \$1400 for OXFAM. You're holding a fundraising dinner on May 13 at Wauchope RSL, with this aim in mind. What time will the event kick off - and what will be offered to guests (i.e. food/entertainment) on the night?

We have a great night out planned – with a three course meal and live band included in the ticket price of only \$40. There will be raffles and a silent auction on the night as well. Tickets are on sale now from the Wauchope RSL and everyone is invited!

And if you can't make it to the fundraiser, but would still like to support us we would love you to donate now at trailwalker.oxfam.org.au our teams are “We thought you said Rum” and “We thought you said Rum too” and we would love readers to give as much as they can to help us hit our \$5000 fundraising goal.

8. How will the money you raise, be spent by OXFAM Australia?

It's really quite motivating for us because OXFAM can make the money we raise go a really long way. \$5000 provides educational materials for 2000 Zimbabwean students living with disabilities or provides 160 families in East Timor with gardening tools so they can grow their own food to support themselves. Every little bit counts when you are literally changing lives!

9. How can we follow your teams' journey?

On event day the OXFAM Trailwalker website (trailwalker.oxfam.org.au) will be following the event for all the teams competing, so you will be able to follow both "We thought you said RUM!" and "We thought you said RUM TOO!" every step of the way!

Media Enquiries - for any questions or to organise an interview with Gareth Norman, CEO of Bundaleer Care Services please call Beth on 02 6585 2811.