

PLAYERS MAKING CHANGE



BRAD SHIELDS: WALKING IN SOMEONE ELSE'S SHOES

LAST MONTH HURRICANES AND WELLINGTON LIONS FORWARD BRAD SHIELDS SPENT HIS SPARE TIME WALKING A MILE IN SOMEONE ELSE'S SHOES – ACTUALLY, MAKE THAT 149 MILES (OR 240 KILOMETRES). IT WAS PART OF THE RED CROSS JOURNEY CHALLENGE, AND ALL THAT WALKING HELPED RAISE OVER \$43,000 FOR RED CROSS SERVICES.

The 26-year-old admits he didn't know much about Red Cross when he jumped on board, but has been exceptionally impressed by the organisation the more he has learned about it.

Brad is rapt with the success of the pilot campaign: "Initially it was expected that about 200 people would sign up to support the fundraiser by joining the journey, but that was exceeded and we ended up with over 800 participants signing up and covering more than 120,000 kilometres."

He first became involved in supporting the organisation when a colleague of his brother's suggested that helping Red Cross could be something that the rugby player might be into. He was right! Now Brad has committed to helping the organisation for a minimum of a year, assisting with a variety of campaigns, which kicked off with the Red Cross Journey.

"They are not just about emergency response and relief. They set up food aid in disasters, accommodation, meals on wheels and run first aid courses. They are there to help out in any crisis," he said.

The Red Cross Journey fundraising concept appealed to Brad for multiple reasons. The challenge required him to choose someone who works for or has benefitted from the organisation's support, then emulate their life by clocking up the number of miles they would take during their own journey. Among the choices were the journey of a Red Cross emergency worker and that of a refugee family walking 1000 kilometres from their country of origin to safety.

The extra appeal to Brad was the health benefit side of committing to walking that distance. "It is important to get our communities moving in a time where devices dominate so much of people's lives.

"I liked the idea of the health component and getting people active," said Brad, who recorded his steps on a pedometer.

As part of the connection to their selected journey, when participants logged on to record their daily achievements on their fundraising page, they would get video clips of their chosen journey in action.

Brad opted to follow the journey of Kath



Playing for the Hurricanes.



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Cosgrove, a member of the Red Cross Dunedin Disaster Welfare and Support Team. He found the 49-year-old mother of two's enthusiasm to help others very inspiring. Kath has been involved with Red Cross for nearly a decade and has responded to some of New Zealand's biggest emergencies. "I really liked getting the video snippets of what Kath's daily journey was like on the variety of disasters she attended."

Fascinated by all the clips that he watched, the one that stood out for him the most was one of the first clips Brad received. It documented Kath responding to the first major Christchurch earthquake, where she was helping the people in the city with the Cathedral in the background.

"It was really poignant for me watching that clip about Christchurch. I want to create an awareness of what Red Cross do. The work that some of these people do is incredible. They drop everything at the click of fingers to help anyone in any way, shape or form."

As part of registering his movement, Brad could bike, swim, tramp, run, walk or do anything else that clocks up kilometres. He chose to do his on

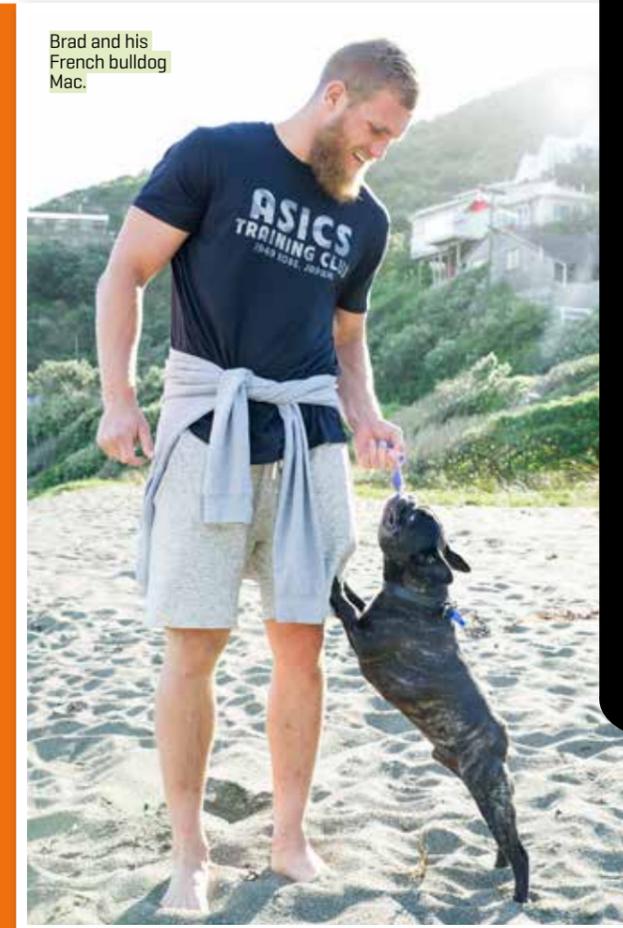
foot and was always keen to get in the extra work ons at training to clock up extra kilometres.

Travel days or the day after a game would be a low tracking day, so he would make up for it by throwing in some extra dog walks. Brad said that due to his French bulldog, Mac, being an absolute guts, the extra output did not alter the dog's weight at all!

Brad's fiancée, Lou, started off doing the walks with Mac and Brad, however she started feeling quite crook, which made the journey a bit more challenging. Then – much to the excitement of the Wellington couple – they found out that Lou's illness was due to the fact they were expecting their first child, which is due in November!

"Once we found out Lou was pregnant it explained why she was so unwell. Morning sickness has knocked her for six, but she is starting to come right now. So it was Mac and I on our own for this one, but she is keen to join us again in the next one, which will be next year. We are looking forward to it being a family affair with Lou, baby, Mac and I next time."

'Here for good' is the Red Cross



Brad and his French bulldog Mac.

Photo: louiseshaton.com

slogan, and it is one that Brad has adopted personally.

"It surprised me how good helping makes you feel. I really enjoyed creating awareness and understanding what other people do. It was a real eye opener."

He also encourages other players to get involved in giving back to help others and organisations.

"Don't be afraid to ask if you want to help organisations. If you have a family connection or affiliation to something, it is always a good start. For me, I didn't know anything about Red Cross so this was an educational journey as well. Team Personal Development Managers are always a good place to start as they can help you get into something."

Brad is looking forward to many more people joining him on his Red Cross Journey next year and also to supporting Red Cross new initiatives. As part of his quest to give back to his community Brad has recently joined the NZRPA as a Board Member and looks forward to helping represent players.

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT RED CROSS, VISIT
www.redcross.org.nz