

Capturing a love of everyday walking

An exhibition that captures the faces and stories of people who champion the joy of everyday walking in Scotland is launching this weekend.

The Humans of the Walk portrait photography exhibition celebrates the many ways in which walking improves physical, mental and social health, regardless of age or ability.

It is launching on 5th May as part of Edinburgh's first Open Streets event – a new initiative involving large parts of the city centre which will be closed to motorised vehicles on the first Sunday of every month after some test days.

Open to the public for free, Humans of the Walk has been created by Scotland's walking charity, Paths for All, and an eight-strong group of female photographers from Edinburgh College of Art, CollectiveF8.

The exhibition – which aims to inspire the nation to fall in love with walking and make time for it every day– is on display at the Museum of Edinburgh Courtyard in Canongate and will run until 12th May.

Ian Findlay, Chief Officer at Paths for All, said: “The stories behind the Scots who champion everyday walking are bold; they demonstrate how walking can do so much for our health and wellbeing.

“This National Walking Month Humans of the Walk is putting across just how walking can help prevent ill health, build communities and create a happier healthier, greener Scotland.

“We want to revolutionise the way people use their cities, and

stop our spaces from being dominated by cars. Scotland's towns and cities should be a backdrop for people walking, scooting, cycling or simply spending time enjoying cleaner, quieter, calmer streets."

Inspired by the famous digital photography project, Humans of New York, the exhibition brings to life individual stories of love, strength, friendship and age – and are all connected by one thing: walking.

Two of the photography subjects, married couple Karine and Sarah Mather, have shared their story about how getting outdoors has helped Karine with her Multiple Sclerosis diagnosis.

Karine said: "Going on walks together is an incredible tool in helping to manage the pain and mental health difficulties that come with the condition. We get instant pleasure from greenery and it's the simple memories we make on our walks that we really cherish.

"It's been great to share our story through Humans of the Walk and help others see just how transformative regular walks can be."

Amber

Brown, member of CollectiveF8, said: "Working on Humans of the Walk has been a perfect project for us, as we aim to address social issues and incite change through photography.

"We formed the collective after bonding over our shared experience of being female artists and realising that we could push each other to do better in collaborating and supporting one another's work."

CollectiveFB is made up of Amber Brown, Izzie Budler, Louise Burns, Lucy Fradley, Anna Hunter, Amy Iona, Emily Lynch and Serina Ma.



Transport and Environment Convener, Councillor Lesley Macinnes, said: “Our plans to transform the way we use Edinburgh’s centre are all about putting people at the heart of the city, so it’s fitting that this wonderful exhibition, focusing on the human stories behind those who have embraced walking, will help launch the first Open Streets event.

“As a Council we are committed to encouraging active travel as a healthy, environmentally friendly mode of transport and these photographs further demonstrate the wide-ranging benefits of walking.”

Paths for All’s aim is to significantly increase the number of people who choose to walk in Scotland, whether it’s walking for leisure or walking to work, school or to the shops.

The charity works to create more opportunities and better environments not just for walking, but also for cycling and other activities to help make Scotland a more active, more prosperous and greener country.

Paths for All’s focus is clear: it wants to get Scotland walking: everyone, every day, everywhere.

Paths for All is giving everyone the chance to win a Nikon B500 Coolpix camera. To enter the competition,

members of the public should post a portrait photo celebrating walking in some way, on Twitter or Instagram, using the hashta #HumansOfTheWalk.

The competition runs from 1st May – 31th May 2019 – the dates of National Walking Month -and multiple entries are allowed.

For more information on Humans of the Walk and the competition, visit: www.pathsforall.org.uk/humans