

Age is just a number as octogenarian completes 81-mile hike

David raises more than £2,000 for Scottish charity, Calum's Cabin.

Embarking on a daunting 81-mile journey, an 81 year old has proved that age is just a number by completing a walking challenge over 10 days, battling wind and rain throughout.

Inspired by a young girl with a life-limiting condition, David Levin, a tenant at Bield Housing and Care's Dean Court development in Bo'ness, took on the Scottish elements in support of Calum's Cabin and in honour of Chiara Petersen Fox.

David walked an average of eight miles each day over the course of 10 days, with his feet taking him from Bo'ness to Longniddry and back again. He successfully completed his challenge on Tuesday with a total of £2,070 raised so far.

13 year old Chiara Fox, the granddaughter of David's golfing buddy, Harry Petersen, was diagnosed with a rare life-limiting condition as a baby. David set off on this challenge to help raise awareness for both the support Calum's Cabin provides and Chiara's condition.

David said: "There have been a few tough days, but quitting was never an option.

"Perhaps others will think, 'well if that old guy can do it, why can't I?', and take the first step, the hardest of all.

"I love to chat. I believe it's an essential component of a healthy life and I've had a great time walking under Chiara's

banner for Calum's Cabin."

David was joined by local residents, Bield staff, Chiara and her family, as well as friends including former professional footballer turned GP, Kenny Deuchar, also known as Dr. Goals.

Local restaurants and cafés along the route kindly provided David with free lunches and hot drinks to keep his spirits high.

At just 8 months old, Chiara was diagnosed with the rare condition MPS1 H, also known as Hurlers. Since then, she has undergone extensive medical procedures including two spinal fusion surgeries, two bone marrow transplants and bilateral hip reconstruction.

Chiara's mum, Michelle Petersen, said: "It's been so great to see David complete this challenge, Chiara is an inspiration to everyone she meets! We've been able to join David at the start and end of his walk, we're thrilled he chose to walk for Chiara and Calum's Cabin."

Money raised from David's hike will go towards Calum's Cabin, to help provide respite for children like Chiara with serious illnesses.

Calum's Cabin was inspired by Calum Spiers and founded by his parents, Duncan and Caroline, and twin sister, Jenna, after Calum passed away from an inoperable brain tumour in 2007.

Calum's Cabin provides free holiday accommodation for children with cancer and their families on the Isle of Bute, East Coast and in Ayrshire. They also offer "home from home" flats in Glasgow when families with children suffering from cancer have to relocate for intensive treatments and clinical trials.

Caroline said: "We love to hear of the memories made by families who have stayed at Calum's Cabin, and we are honoured that David chose to walk for us."

“Many families who have children with cancer are required to travel from all over Scotland to Glasgow’s primary treatment centres for specialist care. The mounting cost of travel and accommodation is often a huge burden for families, adding even more stress and worry to their lives.

“The money David has raised will go towards supporting these families to enjoy a stress-free break.”

Throughout his journey, David kept a daily blog to keep contributors up to date with his whereabouts and how he was getting on.

David was supported by Bield staff who helped to create a manageable walking route along the John Muir Way. To ensure David was well rested after each day of his journey, they also hosted him at Bield properties along the route.

Tracey Howatt, Bield’s Director of Customer Experience, said: “Everyone at Bield is so proud of David for completing this incredible challenge and it’s been great to hear from the team that have joined him.

“We’re continually amazed by the charitable nature of our tenants. David has been a true inspiration and hopefully he can now enjoy a well-deserved rest!”

Bield is devoted to delivering flexible housing solutions and support services designed specifically for older people.

To read David’s blog from his 81-mile journey, visit here: <https://www.bield.co.uk/blogs/>

To donate and find out more, visit: <https://bit.ly/just-giving-walkie-talkie>

