

Dayton Minister to Embark on Awareness Walk to Chicago

By Teri Miller Barker

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” -Romans 12:2

For the past year, Reverend Darryl Radford has been conditioning for this pivotal, defining period in his life. He walks about 25 miles a day, building his stamina to embark on an arduous awareness journey that will take him through several scheduled stops in cities across Indiana, before he reaches his Chicago destination. Travelling roundtrip to Chicago and back is not so unusual, but accomplishing that by walking the approximate 640 miles is.

“If watching a loved one go through radiation or chemotherapy doesn’t encourage you to make a step towards helping someone else, then nothing will,” stated Reverend Darryl Radford, who has partnered with Dayton’s Community Blood Center to help spread his crucial message. The husband and father of three, is a minister at Omega Baptist Church. Author of a book entitled *The Dry Eyes of Innocence*, and founder of a non-profit organization of the same name, Radford plans to walk from Downtown Dayton, Ohio to Chicago, Illinois and back to raise awareness about terminal illnesses such as cancer, HIV/AIDS, and ALS. He’s also walking to raise awareness of the need for bone marrow and blood donations. Anyone who is interested in donating to the cause or walking any part of the trip is welcome to do so. Radford intends to kick off his Links of Love Walk on May 4 and return on May 31, 2008.

After experiencing the devastation of watching two siblings battling terminal illnesses, and having seen one succumb to the disease, Radford decided that he wanted to help others who are dealing with the life-shattering reality of hearing the doctor tell them that their days are numbered.

“The first motivation came when God spoke to me and told me to walk to Chicago,” shared Radford. “After I told him that I would do whatever he asked me to, He enlightened me as to all of the different reasons why I was to walk to Chicago and back.”

Radford explained that his awareness walk is three-fold. The first reason, **change your mindset now**, is based on Romans 12:2, which says, *“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”*

The second message is **the need to give blood**. There’s a huge shortage of blood across the country, and anyone on any day can get into an accident and have a need for blood. The great

thing about giving blood is that you can actually store up your own blood for yourself if you want.

The third need is for **people to join the bone marrow registry**. Of the registered donors in our country, only 6 to 8% are African American, which means that if something were to happen to an African American, chances are they would not be able to find a suitable donor. The sad thing about the low percentage of African American bone marrow donors is that there is a dire need for it. Bone marrow regenerates itself within 3 weeks and you never miss it.

“The world is telling you that you’re going to die, but that’s not what God said,” stated Radford. He wants individuals who have been given those types of life sentences to know that they don’t have to accept it. “The truth of the matter is the doctor does not have the last say.” Radford added, “The Links of Love Walk lets you know that the support thing that we’re talking about is not just empty words, but we’re willing to do something to stand behind you.”

Radford’s book, *The Dry Eyes of Innocence*, chronicles the events that occurred during his brother’s courageous battle with leukemia.

Please visit www.thedryeyes.org for more information about Reverend Radford, his non-profit organization, and the inspiration behind his challenging walk.