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The Appalachian Trail from Maine to Georgia

Julianna's Hike began August 17th, 2003 on a steamy afternoon in Springer Mountain, Ga. In our initial foray on the famed Appalachian Trail we hiked a negligible 2.5 miles. To say we were unprepared for this adventure does not give justice to the word "unprepared." In retrospect, we were really bad hikers overmatched by the challenge we committed to endure: hiking the entire 2,191-mile trail seemed an improbable dream.

I have been told you will enjoy great success if you find something you love to do. Unfortunately, this philosophy was never going to get us to Maine since Julianna's hikers don't really like hiking. Fortunately, after 19 attempts, I now realize you don't need to love what you do to find success. You can move mountains (or climb them!) if you do something because you love.



This journey's core has always revolved around love. Love is why we endure. My love for Julianna, plus the love of my friends who dared to start this quest with me -- Jeff Price, Dave Guyer and Murphy Barton -- have made this two-decades-long marathon the greatest success in the world...one miserable step at a time.

Our quarter-century effort will continue in 2022. We have already completed 12 states – Georgia, Tennessee, North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Vermont. Our 2021 hike was on relatively flat terrain over manageable mountain peaks. That changes this year as we battle the White Mountains, facing our hardest climb to date.

Before we began our 19th love march, we drove to Mount Holly, Vt., to stay with last year's hike angel, Al Boz, who we met at the end of our 18th annual hike when our drivers failed to show at our terminus. This

year Al, a new AT friend, treated us to a sumptuous barbeque dinner served with Vermont beer and capped off with shots of Screwball Whiskey. Boozing is never a good way to start a week on the trail, but we never were too smart. Our first and most formidable peak in the Green Mountains was Killington Peak at 3,900'. On this first day, we passed a marker indicating we have 500 miles of trail left until Katahdin. That is a huge milestone as we now have completed 1,700 miles on this epic trail. Then it started to rain. We had not seen consistent rain on the trail since Maryland some time ago. I now know why Vermont is so green and lush.



The remaining six days of the hike brought many pains and joys. The pain comes from the physical strains our bodies endured and the intense feeling of loss I relive each year for a three-year-old child I have not hugged or seen in twenty years. My joy comes from the love I feel in my heart for Julianna and the ability to appreciate this journey amidst unrivaled beauty, ruggedness and friendship.

Our 2022 hike will be another edition of this familiar odyssey. Each year offers a similar struggle but a different perspective as our physical and spiritual landscape evolves as I get further from Springer Mountain, Ga. and Oct. 8, 2001. We will face this challenge like all our challenges...heads down and always marching forward. This year's obstacles will be daunting for four 58-year-old men. We have far more elevation gain/loss than any year of this hike. Our torment will include Mount Moosilauke (4,802'), Kinsman Mountain (4,358'), Little Haystack Mountain (4,800'), Mount Lincoln (5,089'), Mount Lafayette (5,360'), Mount Garfield (4,500'), South Twin Mountain (4,902') and Mount Guyot (4,500'). This will be a doozy.

This hike remains a painful, but meaningful part of all of our lives. We are determined more than ever to finish together. Although Julianna was the impetus to start this journey, each one of us has endured tragedy and the pain



of the sudden loss of love. The hike is evolving, but the core purpose remains the same for all of us. We hike to gain perspective, give love and find peace.

We will begin our 20th annual hike at **Goose Pond Road, N.H.** and finish 83 miles later at **Crawford Notch, N.H.** We hope to have completed 1,849 trail

miles -- 84.3% of the Appalachian Trail. Of course, we need to conquer the White Mountains first.

We will also give generously. Since 2003, we have raised and donated over \$1,600,000 to share the love so many people provided us when we needed it most. True to our mission, 100% of the money raised goes to organizations that support grieving, ill and needy children. The largest beneficiaries continue to be the **Uplift Center for Grieving Children** and the **Breathing Room Foundation**. Uplift supports children and families who have experienced tragic loss and cannot afford counseling. Many of these kids experience severe personal trauma which often leads to self-destructive depression, drug use, giving up, or a recurring feeling that no one cares. The Center allows kids to channel grief correctly and gives them a feeling of hope and community. The Foundation helps families living with cancer to live more stable lives in the face of disease. We also support other organizations, including the **Take A Breather Foundation**, which grants wishes to children living with cystic fibrosis.

Our 20th annual hike will begin on August 26th and end Sept. 2nd, 2022. Although the hike is arduous it pales in comparison to the struggle many of the families we support face on a daily basis.

We want to thank everyone who has shown interest and sponsored us in this Hike for Jules. You have all helped us heal and, more importantly, helped keep Julianna's love alive.