





Danny Garcia greets children in Uganda, during a walk through Africa in August.

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## Leesburg man plans walk from Dubai to Beijing

Local

By Matt Van Tassel

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To donate to The Global Walk Foundation and keep tabs on Garcia as he treks around the world, visit [www.globalwalk.cc](http://www.globalwalk.cc)

**Danny Garcia talks the talk. For more than a decade, he has traveled the globe, promoting peace and children's rights.**

And when it comes to walking the walk, he's logged more than 24,000 miles in the process – about once around the world – since he started The Global Walk Foundation 11 years ago.

“There's something about walking,” Garcia said. “When people walk, they start to look within themselves.”

Ghandi fasted, King marched, Garcia walks.

Next month, Garcia will embark on a journey 11 years in the making. For the past couple months, Garcia has been exhausting his resources and tapping connections – ambassadors, representatives from the United Nations, corporate sponsors and other humanitarians – and praying, to prepare for a walk starting in the U.S. and ending in Beijing. He plans to walk in about 25 countries including Dubai, Kuwait, Jerusalem, Turkey, Afghanistan, India, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, Taiwan, Japan and Korea, and reach his destination -- the Summer Olympics in Beijing -- by August 2008.

"I feel like a horse in the gate just before a race," Garcia said. "But I know I just need to be patient."

Garcia has walked alone, and he's walked with 20,000 people. He's walked with armed guards and he's walked with no money or possessions, asking people for water along the way. He puts his faith in God and prays everything will work out.

While walking, he's been threatened by lightning, snowstorms, mudslides and tornadoes. He's been attacked by wild dogs, snapped at by snakes, held up at knife-point and kidnapped. Through it all, he has persevered and has been acknowledged by kings, presidents, ambassadors and popes because of it.

"I cannot boast about myself," he said, "I can only boast about what God is doing in my life." Garcia said people don't act on their faith enough. "We spend too much time talking and not enough time doing," Garcia said. "You can't just do peace, you have to be peace."

Garcia, 62, was born in Spanish Harlem to Afro-Cuban parents. He has easy, inviting eyes and when he talks, they are absent of any trace of judgment. He is open, honest, and within 15 minutes of speaking to a new acquaintance, will spill personal feelings that some husbands don't tell their wives in an entire lifetime together.

"People need to know 'I love you' – they need to hear it," Garcia said.

A strange thing happens when Garcia walks – people ask him for things, impossible things.

While walking in Jordan in 2001, Majed Bahedh told Garcia about his 6-year-old son who needed a heart operation. The family was close to reaching its goal of 5,000 Jordanian dinars – about \$7,000 – when Bahedh's brother-in-law stole the money and fled.

Garcia walked from Jordan to Egypt, passing through hostile sections of Israel and Palestinian territories to raise money for the boy. Garcia raised half of the money from the walk and generated so much publicity for the hospital, the doctors agreed to donate their time to cover the rest of the cost.

Some lives he saves, others he improves. When he finishes a project, he moves on to the next. He seldom looks back, because the number of people in need is ever-growing.

After Hurricane Katrina, Garcia walked for 33 days from New York City to New Orleans and raised about \$500,000 in donations for the New Orleans Rescue Mission.

Garcia hopes to begin his walk in mid-January at the United Nations in New York City and walk to the airport, where he'll fly to Dubai and make his way to Beijing from there. On Dec. 21, the U.N. General

Assembly passed two resolutions regarding global cease-fires – an Olympic Truce and a cessation of hostilities on the International Day of Peace, Sept. 21, 2008. Garcia hopes to make it back to New York by that date to celebrate.

Monica Willard, a non-governmental organization representative to the United Nations, said, "Danny's presence and service brings out something most positive in those who meet him. The story is so much bigger when you consider what it means to others to get involved or to just walk a few steps together with Danny."

Garcia is still asking – and praying – for donations from corporate sponsors and individuals to pay for airplane tickets, drivers, food and shelter.

"I need a miracle," he said, "a Christmas miracle."

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