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**Please make your check payable to
“The Philadelphia Foundation”
for the Julianna Hike Fund
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**The Philadelphia Foundation
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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 17 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 decades-long marathon the greatest success in the world...one miserable step at a time. Misery must be contagious as new friends again joined us last year: Dave Lafferty, Rob Denault, Matt Lynch, Dan Castaldi, John Rogers, and Joe Innes.

Our efforts will continue in 2020. (I just hope Barfy can leave Canada.) We have completed 11 states – Georgia, Tennessee, North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts. Vermont will be #12.

Last year's hike through Massachusetts was another huge step in our quarter-century journey. It began with a major calamity to The Zinger, our oversized camper used to comfort the softening hiking team. Outside

White Plains, N.Y. the V-Frame which attaches the camper to the truck snapped, leaving the camper immobile and unusable. In a moment, we were back to the tents and personal nightly torment.

We began the annual tradition with a challenging 1,000' climb to the crest of East Mountain. At that point we took our first break of the day when Barfy informed us he had already exceeded his daily exercise requirement (determined by Fitbit) by 73%. He quipped, "One good thing about this hike is that I will have completed my annual exercise requirements by the end of this week." As usual, we hiked in woods and over rocks, but also a new element... standing water that created a sloppy and buggy mess. By the end of our first day, I counted 20 mosquito bites.

We hiked for seven days and completed about 90 miles. Although our nightly routine was more like an Eagles tailgate than a camping experience, we still faced the hardship and resulting rewards of the daily hiking struggle over awkward terrain. As I contemplate future hikes, I am quite confident 2019 will be remembered as one of our easiest years. Massachusetts had good conditions without too many extreme elevation changes and every night was another party.



Our 2020 campaign promises a new but old experience. Glamping is out and nightly struggle is back in. We'll hike with full packs and stay outdoors overnight. We'll eat freeze-dried meals and water from a creek, not the barbecue chicken and Budweiser we've indulged in over the last six years. We'll be hiking the entire week on the Long Trail, completed in 1930, one of the original inspirations for the Appalachian Trail as it stands today. Stratton Mountain will be our highest peak at 3,936'.

This hike remains a meaningful part of all of our lives and that is why we are determined to hike even during a pandemic. 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 18th annual hike on Route 9 in Bennington, Vt. and finish 72.5 miles later on Route 103 at Clarendon Gorge, Vt. We will have completed 1,686 miles -- 77% of the Appalachian Trail. I can't wait to conquer New England...our last nemesis.



We will also give generously. Since 2003, we have raised and donated over \$1,400,000 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 18th annual hike will begin on August 30th and end Sept. 4th, 2020. 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.