



A Walk To Remember

The last time I saw fellow-Brit Matthew Rickard – out and about on a Saturday night, at Boat Quay – he was fused to his BlackBerry and enjoying Singapore’s social scene. Now, two years later, this technology executive donates much of his spare time to worthy causes.

The seed of Footsteps for Good was planted in 2007, when Matt visited an orphanage for tsunami victims.

“I was touched by how much hope the children had,” he recalls. “Some of them had lost their entire families, but they were still able to smile and dance for us.”

After learning that the orphanage needed a new extension, Matt then returned to Singapore and began fundraising. It wasn’t until 2009, however, that Footsteps for Good was officially launched after Matt’s “upsetting, but inspiring” humanitarian trip to Myanmar, following the 2008 cyclone that devastated much of the country.

Footsteps for Good raises funds for underprivileged children and those affected by natural disasters, by leading groups of individuals on a sponsored trek through the jungles of Northern Thailand. “It’s a chance for people to get away from their BlackBerries and go back to basics, while doing something meaningful,” says Matt.

Those who sign up for the trek can expect to spend four days marching through lush jungle, staying either in local villages or in camps under the stars. The participants raise funds by getting sponsorship from friends and colleagues, and to date the organisation has raised \$144,788 for various charities.

When I ask Matt how his life has changed since embarking on this humanitarian path, he explains:

“I used to watch natural disasters unfold on the news, but it wasn’t real to me. Having witnessed the harsh reality of how these events really affect people makes me less likely to complain; less worried about the things that I don’t have.” He adds that his goal is not only to help those in need, but also to positively affect the lives of those who join him on the trek.

“It can be a particularly rewarding experience. The isolation of the jungle offers some much-needed time for reflection.” 

By Deborah Goldman

If you would like to join Matt on the adventure of a lifetime, the next trek will take place in January 2012. Funds raised will be donated to an organisation in Thailand that provides education for poor communities (www.childsdream.org). To register, email matt@footstepsforgood.com. www.footstepsforgood.com

