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Million-yard swim marathon fundraiser concludes successfully

By Jon Kingdon

A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step and you eat an elephant a bite at a time. In January, David Miller took the first of approximately 740,000 strokes in his quest to swim a million yards before the end of the year. His goal was to raise \$50,000 for the Cancer Research Institute. After averaging 4,000 yards, each day, five days a week, Miller accomplished both missions on Dec. 27.

Coming into this last day, reaching the magic number of \$50,000 appeared to be unattainable. "This morning, we only had \$38,200 donated," Miller said. "However, at 9 a.m., we got an anonymous donation of \$10,000 which put us just \$1,800 short of our goal. We put that out on our social media and before I started swimming, we had reached the \$50,000 mark. As of now, donations have reached \$51,490. Contributions can still be made at www.swimamillion.org. Just hit the "Donate Button."

This last day was not a solitary effort for Miller. There were 33 other lanes that were used by individuals and couples who donated \$250 each to gain the privilege of swimming with Miller to the finish line. There were also several spectators cheering them on. Campolindo graduate and Olympic medalist Kim Vandenberg, who currently lives in Southern California, was in town and swam alongside Miller. "When I learned that Kim was going to be in the area for the holidays, I invited her to swim with us," Miller said. "She brought along her mother and grandmother and it was perfect with three generations of her family swimming alongside me." There was only one drawback for Miller with Vandenberg swimming in the next lane: "Kim swam half as fast as she normally does and still swam twice as fast as me.

"The event was a wonderful, warm and emotional finale to a long and complicated year but even the fear of COVID couldn't suppress the enthusiasm of all those present," Miller said.

As Miller approaches his 60th birthday, what will be his next challenge? "I haven't convinced myself of anything in particular," Miller said, "but there's always something in the back of my mind. I'll figure it out soon."

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