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Eddie's marathon effort for Downs Syndrome gains support

The smiling face of a four year old girl will keep Eddie Cody firmly focused on his mission to finish this weekend's Sydney Marathon in under four hours.

The gently-spoken Irishman who works as a steel pipeline builder on a mining project outside Karratha, Western Australia, has spent the best part of this year jogging along a dusty Pilbara mining road in preparation for a marathon effort to raise money for Down Syndrome NSW.

The cause is close to Eddie's heart as his niece Ava, who lives in Tipperary Ireland, was born with Down syndrome.

Eddie said he wanted to do something that would not only raise much-needed funds to help children like his niece Ava, but also raise awareness of the tremendous work done by Down Syndrome NSW.

And the pipefitter, who jogs up to 15km each day in the extreme Pilbara heat, has had plenty of support from his hundreds of Murphy Pipe and Civil work mates who cheer him on as he passes by every ten minutes or so.

His exhausting jogging pace, which has seen Eddie cover more than 1600km in eight months, struck a chord with the men and women working alongside him, and last week they dug deep to raise more than \$60,000.

According to his work mates, Eddie's dedication to toil away for 12 hours in the heat, only to don runners to finish off his day with a 15km run, was more than enough inspiration for them to get behind his fundraising effort.

An auction night last week saw everything that could be sold – sold.

From a rusty old grease gun that went for \$150 to a scale model excavator that prompted one work crew to bid \$10,000.

Nothing was off limits, and shaving the heads of the crew's female safety advisor and pipeline foreman, further bolstered Eddie's fundraising coffers by another \$10,000.

For Eddie, the support from his work mates was in a word – emotional.

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“When I told the guys I was training for the Sydney Marathon to raise money for Down syndrome, I never thought I would generate this amount of support – it’s been very moving to know they want to help me so much,” Eddie said.

“Each day I would jog past my mates after the day was done and they would shout out words of encouragement which kept me focused on my task – but for them to dig so deep into their pockets truly amazed me.

“It’s a big workers camp of more than 2000 and I don’t know everybody, but not long after I began my quest, people I didn’t know would come and give me a slap on the back and commend me for my efforts and tell me about their story of a family member with Down syndrome.

“It was really inspiring and helped me get through the hard slog of training each day.

“I know the marathon is going to hurt, because I am by no means a professional runner, but knowing my efforts will help children like my niece Ava, and having the support of my work mates, will provide me with more than enough inspiration to push on through to the end,” he said.

And his efforts will not go unnoticed at Down Syndrome NSW’s headquarters.

Down Syndrome NSW Chief Executive Officer, Steve Clarke, said Eddie’s efforts during his grueling training regime for the past eight months, and his passion to help children with Down syndrome, is nothing short of commendable.

“If applause and cheering is what Eddie needs to stay focused on his marathon effort on Sunday, he’ll have plenty of that because Down Syndrome NSW will be loudly supporting him from the sidelines,” Mr Clarke said.

“When Eddie contacted us to say he was running the marathon to raise money for our cause we were absolutely delighted, but to see him put in such a training effort after a 12 hour day building steel pipelines in the blistering heat and then managing to raise more than \$50,000 is really fantastic.

“We rely a lot on donations to carry out the important work we do for children with Down syndrome, and it’s people like Eddie that ensure our organisation will continue to help children into the future,” he said.

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