



Help Hope Live

2 Radnor Corporate Center
100 Matsonford Road, Suite 100
Radnor, PA 19087

helphopelive.org
P: 800.642.8399
F: 610.535.6106

Emily Progin, PR and Communications Coordinator

eprogin@helphopelive.org / 800.642.8399

Release: Immediate

Social Distancing Won't Stop Cowboy Philanthropist from 3100-Mile Cross-Country Walk

Hope-Filled Fundraiser Will Assist Friend with Rare Disease

RICHARDSON, Texas— On April 13 at 6:30 a.m., Mckennon "Mac" Laas started his cross-country fundraiser walk at the Southern Terminus of the Continental Divide, the border for Mexico and New Mexico, just 30 miles south of the town of Hachita, Mexico. Mac is walking the Continental Divide Trail from Mexico to Canada, hoping to end his walk at Kawkawa Lake, east of Hope, British Columbia, Canada. Mac is walking to raise funds to assist with medical costs for his friend, Alison Largent, proving in the process that COVID-19 concerns and social distancing can't stop hope.

Alison, who is 48, lives with the extremely rare disease Stiff Person Syndrome and chronic Lyme disease. Mac, whom Allie has dubbed the Cowboy Philanthropist, is her best friend. For every mile of his 3,100-mile trek, [which he is tracking online](#), Mac is pledging \$1 of his own money to the nonprofit Help Hope Live, which is helping Alison to fundraise to help with her immense health care costs. He is inviting others to join his quest for hope by making their own tax-deductible donations at <https://helphopelive.org/campaign/14896/>

When it comes to cowboys, Mac is the real deal. He spent time in the rodeo arena and oil & gas industry before he found his true calling: giving back to members of his community in need of a little hope. Today, the Cowboy Philanthropist works on charity endeavors backed by the spirit of hope and hospitality. According to his website thecowboyphilanthropist.com, Mac wants to "illustrate how our western lifestyles can promote core values of taking care of one's neighbors, giving more than taking, and being a person of integrity."

Until three years ago, Alison was the pinnacle of health, a marathon and triathlon runner and an Ironman finisher—driven, athletic, and independent. Out of the blue, she was diagnosed with [Stiff Person Syndrome](#) (SPS), a rare disease that causes progressive muscle rigidity and painful, unpredictable seizures. "SPS slowly turns you into the Tin Man," she explained. The exact cause of SPS remains unknown, and there is no cure.



Help Hope Live

2 Radnor Corporate Center
100 Matsonford Road, Suite 100
Radnor, PA 19087

helphopelive.org
P: 800.642.8399
F: 610.535.6106

Along with these painful and debilitating physical issues, Alison is reaching the end of her options for treatment, and her medical care is exceptionally expensive, including frequent appointments, hospitalizations, medications, and even home modifications to accommodate a wheelchair as she slowly loses her mobility to SPS. Not all expenses are covered by insurance.

Donations are managed entirely by the nonprofit via Help Hope Live's South-Central Catastrophic Illness Fund. Funds raised are used to cover medical and related expenses only, and the nonprofit confirms medical and financial need and verifies every medical and related expense prior to payment. [Donations can be made via credit/debit or eCheck.](#)

Mac prepared carefully for the hike, including taking every precaution to ensure that he will be entirely isolated from others to limit all COVID-19 exposure and concerns. Alison is humbled and extremely grateful to Mac for his efforts to put critical care within her reach once again: "I call him my brother; I am in complete awe of him."

Help Hope Live is a national nonprofit that specializes in engaging communities in fundraising campaigns for people who need a transplant or are affected by a catastrophic injury or illness. Since 1983, campaigns organized by Help Hope Live have raised over \$141 million to pay patient expenses.

###