

October 26, 2016

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Trailblazers Long Trail Trek: Next time, pack Pop Tarts**

Their goal is ambitious: hike two-hundred-seventy-three miles on the Long Trail to create a scholarship fund for at-risk youth at Laraway Youth & Family Services (LYFS) pursuing post-secondary education. Rick Swanson, Rector of St. John's in the Mountains, and Tim Heath-Swanson emerged from the woods after three-plus weeks on the trail, having raised \$9015.40 towards their \$10,000 goal.

"I still tear up over this trip," Swanson said. "I learned, in a new way, what it means to not have. Creating this fund for the kids, that's what kept us on the trail. I'm not sure we would have finished otherwise."

The men learned lessons along the way. Stopping to cook a daily hot lunch fueled their bodies for journeys of up to fifteen miles per day. Raman noodle soup is a blessing in rain-misted woods. Tuna is not, given its residual aroma that lingers for days and days amid hiking gear.

LYFS is a non-profit organization dedicated to identifying and building on the strengths of children and youth with emotional, behavioral and mental health challenges, through therapeutic education, specialized foster care and public school based behavioral intervention supports.

As they near their \$10,000 fundraising goal, Swanson and Heath-Swanson said that, if they ever do such a hike again, they will definitely pack Pop Tarts! Please visit [www.Laraway.org](http://www.Laraway.org) or contact Katherine Stamper at (802) 635-2805 x 106 or [Kstamper@Laraway.org](mailto:Kstamper@Laraway.org) should you have any questions or wish to contribute to the scholarship fund.

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