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99-Year-Old WWII Veteran's "Walkathon" Is Helping Raise Millions For Coronavirus First Responders

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© Moore Family Former British Army Captain Tom Moore is raising millions for Britain's National Health Service workers

When 99-year-old Tom Moore announced a "walkathon" to help Britain's National Health Service (NHS) staff, he was hoping to collect a modest £1,000 (\$1,250). Instead, the World War II veteran has managed to raise millions from donors worldwide in less than two weeks, and the money is still pouring in at unprecedented rates.

"Suddenly we were on £50,000 [\$62,41]. Then £100,000 [\$124,825]. Now the figures are just unbelievable," a beaming Moore told Daily Mail on April 15, 2020. "I turn my back for a few minutes, and it's shot up again. It's astonishing money. The sort of money you just can't visualize."

Moore's quest to raise money for the selfless and courageous healthcare workers serving at the forefront of the COVID-19 pandemic began on April 9, 2020, with a fundraising campaign on JustGiving.com. Entitled "Captain Tom Moore's 100 Birthday Walk for the NHS," it outlined his desire to raise money for the worthy cause by walking 100 laps of his 27-yard garden in Bedfordshire, England, before his 100th birthday on April 30, 2020. Moore's daughter, Hannah, who encouraged him to take up the challenge, said her father was seeking a way to thank the NHS doctors and nurses who helped him during a recent hip replacement surgery and a previous bout with skin cancer.



© Moore Family As part of a fundraising campaign, Moore promised to walk 100 laps of his garden by his 100th birthday on April 30, 2020

Though cautiously optimistic, Moore and his daughter believed their fundraising goal was a "stretch." To their pleasant surprise, they surpassed the £1,000 (\$1,250) target within 24 hours of the campaign's start, and the donations have only accelerated since. As of April 16, 2020, an astounding £15,889,673.66 (\$19,834,285) has been donated by 790,339 supporters.

In an interview with British television hosts Piers Morgan and Susanna Reid, a delighted Moore said: "It just shows that we're such a generous, thoughtful people throughout the country. We're so generous in every way that this sort of money had come along, and it's for such a super purpose for our doctors, our nurses, all the backup people deserve everything that we can give them."



© BBC/YouTube screen capture Moore completing his final ten laps on live television with the National Guard in attendance

And Moore is far from done. After completing the final 10 of his promised 100 laps ahead of schedule on April 15, 2020, he announced his intention to continue the fundraising effort by walking an additional 100 laps — in 10-lap daily increments — by his centennial birthday. Moore's daughter is delighted about her father's decision to keep going, and says that the worthy cause is giving him a new purpose, something to look forward to each day.

When asked about the COVID-19 pandemic, the retired civil servant said, "You've all got to remember that we will get through it in the end, it will all be right. For all those people finding it difficult at the moment, the sun will shine on you again, and the clouds will go away."