

The Heimdahl Miracle

by Dale Reesor

Thirty-two years ago in a small country church in rural Alberta, two Sunday school teachers wondered. They wondered if there was something that their class could do to make a difference in the life of a child somewhere in the world. A little girl in the class suggested aloud, "If we raised money, maybe we could sponsor a child overseas." The class pondered the idea for a moment, and decided it would be something worthy of their best efforts. The two teachers, Mamie Wenger and Hattie Kellert approached Mark Buntain, whose passion for Calcutta lit a fire in the two teachers' hearts. As they listened to him, the idea of a walk-a-thon began to formulate in their minds, and now, 32 years later, the *Global Care-A-Thon* continues to raise over \$100,000 a year for projects around the world.

Focusing on feeding the homeless in Calcutta, caring for orphaned children in Romania, and nutritional projects in Mozambique, this walk-a-thon is not unlike any other walk-a-thon.

Participants raise funds through their network of friends and relatives, organizers set a goal, and then every June, walkers gather in the tiny hamlet of Heimdahl, Alberta, situated about 40 minutes south of Edmonton. From the beginning, this picturesque country setting of rolling hills and green pasture land has served as the backdrop for the walk-a-thon.

The walkers typically gather at the little country church and start out on their six kilometre walk. Along the route are scripture verse signs from Matthew's Gospel which serve as reminders of the reason for their dedication. "I was hungry and you fed me," says Jesus at one point. A police patrol car ensures that the walkers

are safe, and tired stragglers are offered rides from other volunteers. One could easily assume that a six kilometre walk would be reserved for the young and physically fit. However, this walk has a solid core group who has faithfully walked in every event. These seniors know that their efforts each year continue to make ministries overseas a reality.

Seniors who faithfully call their friends and relatives for sponsorship are the key to the enduring success of this event.



Leaving the church for the 6 km walk



Celebrating after the walk-a-thon