



Photo positively represents Zach Bonner



# GRIT AND GUTS: ZACH BONNER'S LIFESTORY

# IMAGINE

...a street lined with cheering children, each of them holding a sign made just for you. Signs reading: "You're an Amazing Person!", "Good Job!", "Don't Stop Believing!"

That's what it was like for 11-year-old Zach Bonner when he visited Lupin Hill Elementary school in California. He read all of these signs and more. He read: "Keep on Rolling Zach!", "Great job Zach!", "Go Zach!" But what could an 11-year-old have done to earn such praises?

The fourth-grade students at Lupin Hill Elementary were excited to meet Zach. They had tracked his progress on the Internet as he walked from Florida to Washington D.C.

Walking 1,225 miles takes an adventurous spirit. It takes grit. Grit comes from having a purpose that compels you to do something.

After a hurricane ripped through his hometown, Zach found his purpose. He would help collect supplies for people whose homes were destroyed.

He was only six-years-old, but he had grit. Pulling his little red wagon behind him, Zach went door-to-door collecting bottled water. Zach didn't just collect for a day, or even just for a week. No, Zach's grit compelled him to collect water for four months. During that time, he gathered enough water to fill his mother's pick up truck 27 times!

Thinking about homeless children made Zach sad. He thought people would want to help homeless children if only they knew that there were 1.3 million of them in the United States. Zach learned about a woman called "the Peace Pilgrim." This woman had walked over 25,000 miles to raise awareness for World Peace. Peace Pilgrim had a lot of grit and so did Zach.

Zach came up with a bold plan. He hoped this plan would make others want to help the homeless too. He would walk from

his home in Florida to The White House in Washington D.C. As he walked, newspapers, magazines, and news programs reported on his progress. Zach's walk inspired people to donate over \$25,000 for homeless children.

When Zach spoke to the students at Lupin Hill Elementary, he told them, "You don't have to have a lot of money, because I had none. You just have to have the desire to do something... All you have to do is think, how can I make one person smile today?"

The next year, Zach decided to do something even bolder. He walked all the way from Florida to California. Every day he walked 17-22 miles and as he walked, he handed out gift cards to people in need. It took him 178 days to complete the 2,478-mile walk. During that time, he raised thousands of dollars for homeless children.

Once Zach discovered that he wanted to help homeless children, there was no stopping him. Zach's grit compelled him to think boldly and accomplish great things. How can your grit help you write your own best *True Success*™ lifestory?

## QUESTIONS LEAD TO UNDERSTANDING M2/5

1. What evidence is there that Zach had grit? What was the result of that?  
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2. What made Zach decide to help homeless children?  
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3. How can you learn from Zach's lifestory and show grit in your life to help others?  
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