

Walking distances for a worthy cause

Doctor and husband plan 13-day trek to raise much-needed funds for Bridgepoint Health

LORIANNA DE GIORGIO
Town Crier

Out of love for her late grandfather, combined with her commitment to Bridgepoint Health's palliative care unit, Dr. Karen Chien is embarking on a walk like no other.

The Riverdale resident and her husband, Adam Nicklin are trekking 300 km through the Scottish Highlands this month all in the attempt to raise much-needed money for the hospital's palliative care unit, where Chien works.

The couple is planning the 13-day trek, from Aug. 28 to Sept. 9, which will see them hiking the rugged 155 km West Highland Way, as well as the equally challenging 120 km Great Glen Way.

Her parents will meet the couple in Inverness, Scotland when Chien and Nicklin are done.

"It would be our pleasure if we could draw some attention to the

incredible work that is performed within these walls every day," said Chien, who has worked at Bridgepoint for four years.

The palliative care unit personally helped Chien and her family deal with the death of her grandfather, Dr. Sau Ngai Chan, who spent his final days this past May in the unit.

For two months, the doctors and staff cared for Chan and ultimately helped him die with dignity, said Chien.

"I had a lot of reservations for being that close," she said about the fact that she not only worked in the unit but had a loved one that was being cared for there.

"(But) from the inside, and the outside looking in, this is an incredible unit."

This isn't the couple's first walking trip they have planned to raise money for the Riverdale hospital.

Last year, in memory of Nicklin's grandmother, who died from a chronic disease, they embarked on a hike along the Pennine Way.

The Pennine Way starts just south of Manchester and takes you up along the backbone of England until you reach Scotland's border.

Chien and Nicklin felt the 450

km walk was an ideal way to not only honour Nicklin's grandmother, but bring attention to the needs of those who suffer from complex, chronic disease.

Last year's hike raised just under \$4,000 for Bridgepoint's palliative care unit and a complex medical assessment and rehabilitation unit, where Chien also works.

"We felt that this year, given the circumstances, we wanted to especially bring attention to the needs of those who have terminal disease," she said. "It would be fabulous if we could exceed what we raised last year."

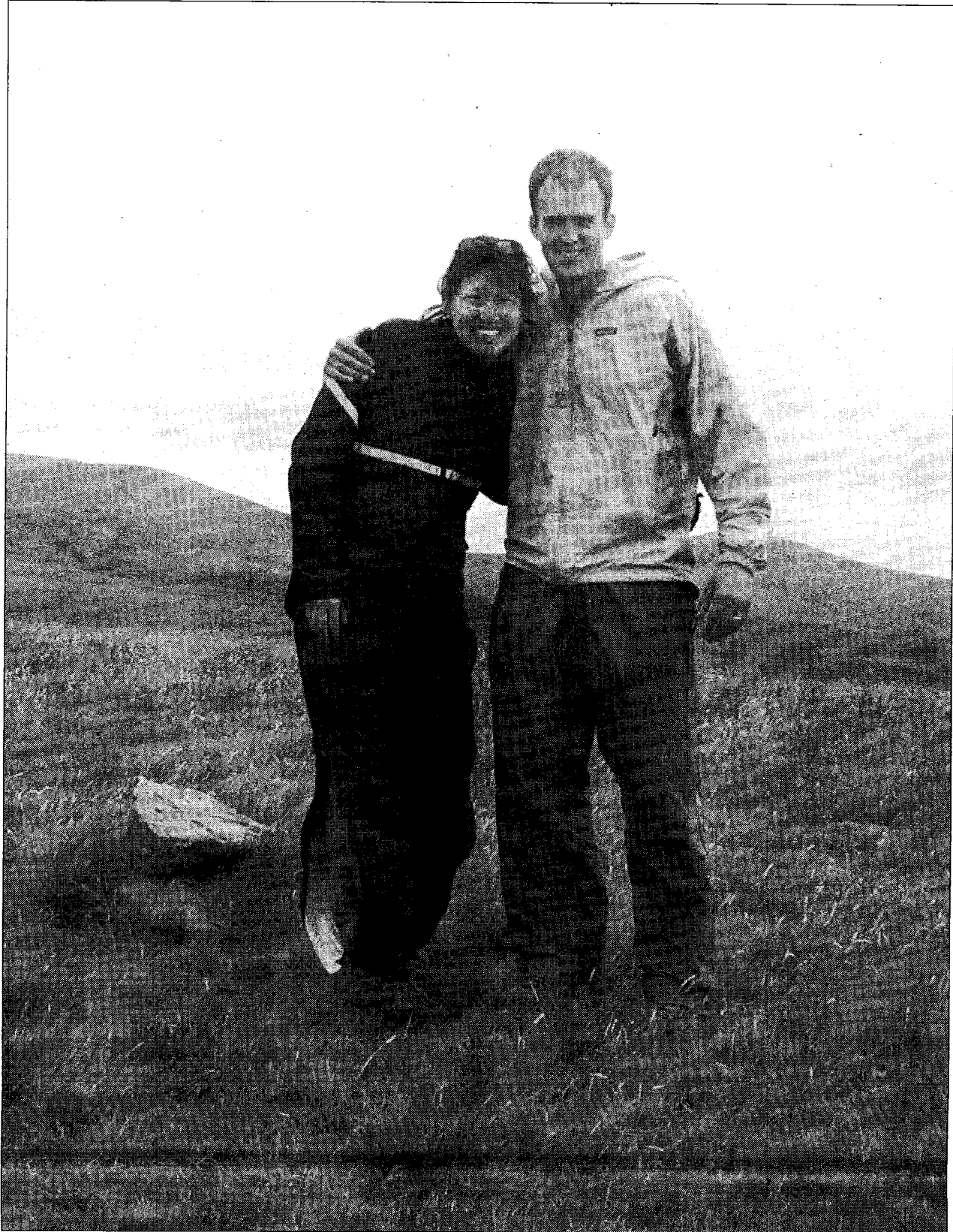
Chien's family has a long commitment to Bridgepoint. Chien's brother, Dr. Vincent Chien is an internal medicine specialist and is chair of the hospital's medical advisory committee.

The siblings' mother, Lorraine Chien, is a world-renowned teddy bear designer for the GANS toy company.

On a number of occasions, she has donated bears to Bridgepoint's fundraising auctions.

As well, every patient that comes to the hospital's palliative care unit receives a bear from Chien.





REACHING FOR THE TOP: Dr. Karen Chien and her husband Adam Nicklin during their fundraising hike along the Pennine Way in England. This year, they plan on trekking 300 km through the Scottish Highlands to raise money for Bridgepoint Health's palliative care unit from Aug. 28 until Sept. 9.