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Ball State graduate student to walk across country

Will start journey at Truxton Park on Saturday

MUNCIE, Ind. – Jason Glassburn, a graduate student studying journalism at Ball State University, isn't worried about finding a summer job in the midst of recession. In the last few months, he's been more concerned with the simple logistics of survival, which will aid him in his walk across the nation.

Starting at 2 p.m. Saturday, May 16, Glassburn will dip his hand in the water on the shore of Truxton Park and embark on his journey to walk across the United States. He expects the endeavor to take five to six months. His walk will end in San Francisco in November.

Glassburn is dedicating his walk to Free the Slaves, a not-for-profit organization headquartered in Washington, D.C. Free the Slaves assists slave liberators around the world in providing runaway slaves with food, shelter and safety from their captors.

Glassburn originally planned to walk in the fall of 2007, with the intention of walking from Tipton, Ind., his hometown, to however far he could get in the course of the summer of 2008. However, due to his brother, sister and father all getting married last summer he could not carry out his original plan. He rescheduled his walk across the country for May, after he finished the coursework for his master's.

"Originally, I just thought it would be cool to walk across the country," Glassburn said. "But after I put more thought into the matter I decided that I wanted to walk for something more than myself."

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That's when he connected with Free the Slaves.

"What most people do not realize is that there are more than 27 million slaves worldwide," Glassburn said. "Slavery exists in the form of children soldiers, field laborers and prostitutes all over, yet people do not recognize it as slavery. I hope that my walk will be able to change this misconception."

When Glassburn tells people he is walking for Free the Slaves people often give him a weird look, because they associate slavery with the Civil War, Glassburn said. What most people do not understand is that even though slavery is considered illegal in all 194 countries in the world the practice of slavery still exists.

"Jason's walk to end slavery will help hundreds of people walk toward their own freedom," said Jolene Smith, CEO and co-founder of Free the Slaves. "Today Free the Slaves' supporters like Jason are enabling entire villages in slavery to link arms and walk away from their slaveholder. Throughout history, there have been individuals who take a dramatic stand against slavery. Jason is one of them."

Glassburn has put a great deal of thought into his journey. He will be carrying approximately 50 pounds of equipment that he will use to endure the walk, as well as document it. His primary equipment includes: a large backpack, sleeping bag, boots, high resistance socks, a camcorder and a computer.

The walk has already received attention from several media outlets in Indiana. The Indianapolis Star, Muncie Star Press, Muncie, Ind. and WMDH 102.5, New Castle, Ind., have interviewed Glassburn.

Interviews can be arranged through Neil Ruhland (712-540-6345 or eclecticcommunications@gmail.com) or Megan McNames (765-212-7607 or eclecticcommunications@gmail.com).

For more information about Glassburn's walk visit his Web site walkamerica.weebly.com. His Web site provides links to his Facebook and Flickr pages, and more information about Free the Slaves.

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