

'Backpack' Jack from Aldergrove was one of several dogs who took part in the Canadian Animal Rescue and Extended Shelter (CARES) walk at Derby Reach Park on Sept. 15 that raised $10,000 for the no-kill cat shelter in Langley. (Dan Ferguson/Black Press Media)

Locally famous pup supports cat shelter

Backpack Jack the terrier has his own Instagram

Dan Ferguson

'Backpack' Jack, a friendly American Staffordshire Terrier from Aldergrove, was one of the best-dressed dogs at the Canadian Animal Rescue and Extended Shelter (CARES) walk at Derby Reach Regional Park on Sept. 15.

Jack was proudly wearing his backpack when he arrived for the fundraiser with his human, Jeremy Mills.

"Jack being energetic and as strong as he is, I thought we could put a backpack on him," Mills explained.

"He could carry some of his own dog treats, and even some of his own water, and it's worked out very well," Mills told Black Press Media.

"He's now seven-and-a-half, and we're hiking and walking, he carries his pack, he carries his water, and I don't have to carry it all."

Jack has his own Instagram page devoted to his camping and hiking outings with his human.

About 40 people took part in the walk, which raised a little more than $10,000 for the no-kill cat shelter in Langley.

CARES president Carol Briner said the shelter was overcapacity, with 120 cats when their maximum is 100, and there are also about 60 cats, kittens, and mothers in various foster homes in Langley.

"I've got seven [foster cats]," Briner said.

"We've had to take in extra this year because [of] people not being able to afford vet bills and having to turn the cats in, people with rental situations who have to turn their animals in, people who go to seniors homes and have to turn their animals in, and then, of course, there's the strays who have no home at all. "

Money from the walk will help with food and bills and vet bills, "which are always high and run $120,000 a year," Briner estimated.

"When we take in kitties, everybody has to go to the vet and be checked out and we do lots of spay and neuters," Briner explained.

"Sometimes we get cats with broken legs, so the vet bill really goes to the moon, and cats that are not in very good shape when we receive them."

Travelling father, son, pug back at home

The trio visited Cruise-In last month to share summer journey

Kyler Emerson

Aldergrove's travelling trio of father, son, and pug are back home for the school year, but still came out for the Langley Good Times Cruise-In in early September.

Daryl Berden first heard of Cruise-In last year through local word-of-mouth.

"The event intrigued me with its unique blend of classic cars, friendly atmosphere, off-road vehicles, and the opportunity to connect with fellow enthusiasts," he told The Star.

He said the sense of community drew him to the event.

"We enjoyed catching up with old friends, meeting new faces, and immersing ourselves in the vibrant local car and truck culture," Berden said.

In the last year, the Berdens – Daryl, Cayden, and their pug Tosha – travelled to Frenchman Coulee in Washington, Lewis and Clark Caverns in Montana, Yellowstone National Park, Black Hills Caverns in South Dakota, and many other incredible locations.

Visiting Mount Rushmore was particularly nostalgic for Berden, who last visited many years ago.

"Over the years, the site has evolved from basic facilities to a modern visitor centre with educational exhibits and improved viewing areas," he said.

"Witnessing Cayden's reaction to the monument and engaging with the interactive exhibits gave a fresh perspective."

This was only a few of their most recent adventures during the summer.



Aldergrove's Daryl Berden and his 12-year-old son, Cayden, have been sharing their adventures around North America through their Youtube channel since April 2020. (Special to The Star)

The annual trips began during the pandemic, when lockdowns and shorter work hours forced Berden to find something to keep himself busy and de-stress.

"I grew up travelling all over the United States and Canada, we used to camp, 4x4 and explore. As I grew up I lost that, and when the pandemic hit, I needed something to keep my mind busy," Berden explained.

With less work, and school, he packed up his son and pug for their first adventure in 2020.

"My wife was still working so she would join us on occasion, but now I could show my son the country's hidden treasures," he explained.

The Aldergrove father and son took off in Berden's 4x4 pickup truck, equipped with a bed for a tent, kayaks, and other kinds of gear required for their overlanding adventures.

"[Cayden] now picks places for us to go, and has started filming for [our Youtube] channel – now his channel," Berden said.

With some brief experience in video-making in his construction job, and encouragement from friends, Berden created the Vancity Adventure channel to share his travels.

The name was chosen to represent both the Vancouver area and capture what they are doing – adventuring.

Since it was created four years ago, he said the channel has grown quickly and while most of his audience isn't local, he's excited to share the B.C. with the world.

As a father, Berden said these adventures have brought him and Cayden closer together and helped them bond even more.

"These adventures provide bonding, education, stories, and something to learn from. It is always a lesson on confidence, decisiveness, and self awareness."

To follow the Berden's adventures, people can visit Vancity Adventures on Youtube.