

■ SHELBY

Retired Marine with a cause to trek around the

THE STORY

Man promotes city project in long hikes

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SHELBY — Everywhere is within walking distance for Danny Garcia.

The 61-year-old retired Marine departed from Shelby on a route that will end in Beijing, China just in time for the 2008 Summer Olympics.

The walk is sponsored by local business Hallelujah Acres and has grown to support several local projects, such as Weed and Seed and Project Safe Neighborhoods.

Hallelujah Acres and Shelby Mayor Ted Alexander plan to talk with community leaders to find ways Garcia's walk can bring awareness to their causes.

Garcia has been walking all over the world for the past 10 years.

"One day, just like Forrest Gump, I got up and got walking. That's what God told me to do," Garcia said.

Shelby served as Garcia's starting point for the walk that will cover most of the east and west coasts. The city will also serve as an anchor to his mission.

"Shelby's partnership with Laurel, Miss., is such an example to other cities to go into partnerships and to take care of each other," Garcia said.

Garcia, along with his team of Jackie Charsagua, Jackie Causey and Ron West — the driver, a volunteer from Hallelujah Acres' staff — left Wednesday afternoon.

Garcia's route leads from Shelby to the adopted city of Laurel and then to New Orleans.

In both cities, Garcia will take part in symbolic walks.

After New Orleans, Garcia will make 11 or so planned stops before coming back to Shelby on Sept. 2 for a symbolic walk around the city.

That walk will pass by a number of Shelby churches. Everyone is invited to gather anywhere they like along the route to join Garcia.

"Just walking a mile gives you the feeling of participating in something global," Garcia said.

In his travels, Garcia has



Roger Darrigrand / The Star

Danny Garcia points out the Pan-American Highway, which he will walk from Alaska to Argentina. **Read the story:** Find out why this man feels called to walk for community causes.

seen many beautiful and many heartbreaking things.

"If you see women in Africa walking miles for water, if

Danny's Return to

The Shelby Walk is on Sept. 2, starting at Hallelujah Acres.

■ Additional starting points announced as the walk progresses.

■ Walk ends at Central United Methodist Church.

■ Ending ceremonies will include refreshments.

by Danny Garcia

you see a village being destroyed by AIDS, if you see kids who have lost arms to bombs — you feel compelled to do something," Garcia said, "And I've realized you can't wait on anyone else. I want to help now."

He plans to tie the Shelby walk, in with Project Safe Neighborhood.

"Danny's walk will hopefully highlight

issues work,"

Alexan

"Just walk the feeling

some.

Danny Walker