

RUNNER: Man's Trek Aids Shelter

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Orangewood.

"I feel like I did my part in running, my sponsors did their part in putting me out there, the media did its part in covering it, but people haven't done their part and given that \$5 or \$10 that will make a difference," Jones said.

Orangewood officials, however, said they were thrilled with the attention Jones got.

"He's succeeded in raising the awareness of people across the state of California," said Gene Howard, executive director of the Orangewood Children's Foundation, which raises money for the shelter.

Orangewood continues to exceed capacity, he said. Built to accommodate 235 children, the shelter averaged 257 occupants last year, peaking occasionally at 300.

Child abuse probably will continue to increase, according to a report being finalized by the Orange County Child Abuse Prevention Council.

"Our projections now are that we believe the trend will continue until 2010," said Howard, a member of the council. "There's no relief in sight."

And the abuse is increasingly severe, Howard said. The nursery, for example, currently houses two infants with broken limbs.

The "average person doesn't make the connection that child abuse affects them," Jones said. "They see carjackers or other people committing crimes and don't recognize where that comes from."

"But it starts when they are little kids getting pounded on. That's when all the damage gets done."

Making Strides

Man's Trek to Raise Funds for Shelter Helps Put Own Demons to Rest

By LISA RICHARDSON
TIMES STAFF WRITER

For 100 days straight, Tom Jones ran from the demons of his youth and in hopes that they might not visit other children.

On Tuesday, Jones ended his 1,500-mile trek from the Oregon border to his hometown of Huntington Beach. Along the way, he raised about \$100,000 for Orangewood Children's Home, Orange County's shelter for children who have been abused—as Jones had been.

He also lost 12 pounds, wore through 14 pairs of shoes and, he hopes, broke the world record for the longest distance run in the shortest amount of time. Officials with the Guinness Book of Records are verifying that.

His journey ended in fanfare, as local firefighters and a cadre of supporters who had run with him the last few miles escorted him to the pier.

But celebrity had been part of the entire trip. Jones, a three-time national kick-boxing champion, black belt in

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TOM JONES

On falling short of fund-raising goal

karate and former sparring partner of actor Chuck Norris, was the subject of dozens of television broadcasts and newspaper stories during his run.

He met with San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown, received a proclamation from Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan and was pictured on the wide screen at San Diego Padres, Anaheim Angels and San Francisco Giants baseball games. He is to be honored at the Dodgers game Thursday.

But the real gains made during the run, he said, were personal. With nothing else to do as the miles passed, Jones reflected. He said he finally forgave the mother who left when he was 5 and the father who beat him until Jones was made a ward of the court at age 8.

"It's been tough. I had to face a lot of skeletons in the closet. But while I was running I finally put myself in their shoes," he said. "It was still wrong what they did, but I now can see how it happened."

The one disappointment of the run was that he fell short of his goal, which was to raise \$250,000 for

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MARK BOSTER / Los Angeles Times

Tom Jones, center, ends run in Huntington Beach.