

Walking America

By Lucy Hough '12 BS



Nancy Zybert giving a donation in Puerto Rico

come up," Zybert says.

She's met people around the country who reinforce how giving many people are, but she's especially learned how much need there is.

"It's kind of scary, actually," she says. "I knew there was a great need. There are people who are working but they can't find jobs that pay more than minimum wage and they struggle to support their families. I'm glad I'm able to help in my own small way.

"I've learned that dreams can come true. Even when one has their own personal dream of what they want to do, maybe down the road, things can all come together and turn the dream into a reality. And in my case, it turned out even better. If I had been able to do this 15 years ago, it wouldn't have been the journey it is now."

The trip hasn't all been easy, though. In Guam, the window was shattered in Zybert's rental car and everything she had was stolen. Luckily, she was able to cancel charges to her credit card and eventually get her passport and driver's license back. She also recently found out that Tula has Lyme disease and isn't able to walk as much as she used to.



From Sept. 1, 2012: "Once in a blue moon, a series of events occur at the same time that make a day seem almost magical. And today was one of those days – I began my long-awaited journey, and held my 1-day-old grandson for the first time, which is a miracle in itself. And to add to the magic of my 56th birthday today, the full moon tonight is literally a blue moon! I'll take that as a good luck charm for the upcoming year."

But Zybert is still loving the experience. She wishes that she could go back to crossing over into Pennsylvania and start over. She has seen U.S. territories that many people not only never see but often don't even know about. Some people ask her if she misses her family, but she has found that the travel lets her see family more often than before and see extended

family and friends she hasn't seen in years.

"I've loved meeting all the people that I've met throughout all my donations, and I love being able to get out and walk through the towns. That's a good way to get to know the community. I'm able to just walk through it all and observe more of the atmosphere," Zybert says.

At the end of the trip in October, Zybert's next steps will be to look for a job and begin the adventure into her future. Until then, readers can vicariously travel along via her blog, Expedition56.com, where last she was visiting a chocolate sculpture museum and then walking the Glacial River Trail in Wisconsin, her 36th state. ■



After years of working and raising children, some people dream of traveling the world. **Nancy Zybert '78 BS**

is content traveling the country, and she's doing it in a way that beats any typical road trip. After selling her ballet studio, Zybert is visiting the 50 states, five territories and Washington, D.C., in just over a year as a part of a personal pilgrimage that she has been dreaming about for at least 15 years. The whole trip is centered around the number 56. She had just turned 56, she's traveling to 56 states/territories, she plans to walk 56 miles a week (with her chocolate lab Tula) and she gives \$56 a day to a charity of her choice.

Zybert started her expedition on Sept. 1, 2012 in Pennsylvania. She walks the eight miles a day even if it means breaking it up into two or three chunks. The donations have been something that she has particularly enjoyed. She planned her budget precisely and tries to skimp here and there on things for herself, such as food or a hotel, so she can have more to give. While she often does research in advance on where to give, sometimes it's by happenstance. Some of the charities she has given to have included food pantries, Ronald McDonald Houses, walking paths and state and national parks. Also, every week she makes sure to donate to a military organization.

"I make a military-based donation as a little way of saying thank you. If not for them, I may not be free to travel all over the place like this. So my military donations are things like care packages mailed overseas or donations to veteran's homes or USOs or other opportunities that