

Broken leg can't stop charitable hiker

By John Johnston

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Denise Hill is one determined hiker. Make that one determined *healing* hiker.

For five months this past spring and summer, the 51-year-old married mother of three grown children trekked 2,258 miles of the Pacific Coast Trail. The Indian Hill resident – whose trail name is Ladybug – had 400 miles to go when she slipped off a log one September morning while crossing a muddy creek in Washington.

She fell into lava rocks and shattered her left leg. Doctors would later say there were more breaks than they could count.



Hill

Other hikers carried her to a campsite, where she waited more than four hours for a rescue crew.

"When I was laying there in excruciating pain ... I was planning when I was going to finish the trail," she says.

"At the end of July, I'm going to go back. I won't start from the beginning, because I've already done that twice. But I'm going to finish the last 400 miles and complete this trail. I have to do it. I'm so passionate about hiking and this charity."

The charity is the Cheryl Rose Walden Foundation, named for her sister, who died of breast cancer in 1998 at age 44. Hill created the foundation

and began her Walking for Walden hikes, in partnership with TriHealth Fitness and Health Pavilion, to benefit breast cancer patients served by Hospice of Cincinnati. About \$30,000 has been raised.

In 2004, Hill completed the 2,174-mile Appalachian Trail.

Last year, she made her first attempt to hike the Pacific Crest Trail, from Mexico to Canada. That hike ended at mile 1,331 when she took a rib jab from her hiking pole while descending a snowy California pass.

"I'm really working hard so I can go back out there," she says.

Donations to the foundation can be made in care of Fifth Third Bank, 7101 Miami Road, Cincinnati 45243.