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Press release

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A Great Trek for The National Autistic Society

Kevin Connell from Hurstpierpoint has presented a cheque worth £28,500 to The National Autistic Society (NAS), after organising a tremendous trek in China.

Kevin, who is an Information Director, successfully recruited 30 participants who spent a week last September trekking approximately 60 miles along the breath-taking Great Wall of China, to raise funds for the NAS, the UK's leading charity for people affected by autism and Newick House special school in West Sussex.

Kevin chose to trek for the NAS because his 12 year old son, Jamie, has Asperger syndrome (which is a form of autism) and he wanted to raise awareness of the condition which is much more common than most people think.

Kevin said "The China Trek was an amazing adventure. It wasn't always easy but we made sure we worked as a team and laughed a lot. We're so pleased to have raised funds for the NAS. The services it runs are a lifeline to thousands of people and we knew that by pushing ourselves we'd enable the charity to help many more. We're also delighted to have helped establish links between Newick House and a school in Beijing by sharing knowledge about supporting children with autism".

Trevor Anderton, NAS Director of Fundraising said: "We're thrilled that Kevin organised such a wonderful event in aid of the NAS. Our fundraisers take part in some truly amazing activities to raise funds for the NAS and we wouldn't be where we are today without them. We would like to extend our thanks to Kevin for his heroic efforts and congratulations to all of the Trek China team who took part".

Kevin and his team have helped the over half a million people in the UK with autism. Funds raised will go towards supporting the Autism Helpline, Parent to Parent line and Befriending scheme.

If you're interested in organising your own event, like Kevin - in aid of the NAS, please contact the events team on 08450 509 001.

ENDS

For further information, images and interviews please call Kelly Brito in the NAS Press Office on 020 7903 3539 or email: Kelly.brito@nas.org.uk

Notes to editors:

- Autism is a lifelong developmental disability that affects how a person communicates with, and relates to, other people. It also affects how they make sense of the world around them. It is a spectrum condition, which means that, while all people with autism share certain difficulties, their condition will affect them in different ways. Some people with autism are able to live relatively independent lives but others may have accompanying learning disabilities and need a lifetime of specialist support. People with autism may also experience over- or under-sensitivity to sounds, touch, tastes, smells, light or colours.
- Asperger syndrome is a form of autism. People with Asperger syndrome are often of average or above average intelligence. They have fewer problems with speech but may still have difficulties with understanding and processing language.

The National Autistic Society is the UK's leading charity for people with autistic spectrum disorders and their families. Founded in 1962, it continues to spearhead national and international initiatives and provide a strong voice for all people with autism. The NAS provides a wide range of services to help people with autism and Asperger syndrome live their lives with as much independence as possible.

The NAS relies on the support of its members and donors to continue its vital work for people with autism. To become a member, make a donation or to find out more about the work of the NAS, visit the NAS website www.autism.org.uk or call the NAS donation line 08702 33 40 40, (national rates apply).

For more information about autism and for help in your area, call the NAS Autism Helpline on: 0845 070 4004 10am-4pm, Monday to Friday, (local rates apply).

The NAS Autism Services Directory is the UK's most comprehensive directory of services and events for people with autism. Visit www.autism.org.uk/autismdirectory to find autism services and support networks in your area.