

# French woman attempts to run around the world

By Masaki Ova

The Jamestown Sun

MEDINA, N.D. — Her journey is like a movie. She gets to see the different and unique landscapes. She is not a superhuman. She is just a 44-year-old French woman dressed in pink, running on the side of a road pushing a stroller, who hopes to inspire someone along the way in her journey of running across the world.

Marie Leautey, who is known as “Lootie,” had just finished her 516th day of her journey around the world Thursday, Sept. 2, after she arrived in

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**MARIE LEAUTEY**

Medina. She will arrive in Jamestown on Friday, Sept. 3, and will make it to Valley City by Saturday, Sept. 4. She will arrive in Tower City on Sunday, Sept. 5, and Fargo on Monday, Sept. 6.

“Somewhere along the way, I’m raising money for charity,” Leautey said. “It can also show that as humans we have a lot more within us than we

think or believe in.”

Leautey began her run around the world Dec. 6, 2019, and completed her run across 17 countries in Europe on June 24. She started her run across North America from Seattle on July 3 with a goal of finishing the continent in New York City by the end of November.

“If it all goes well, in 11 months I’m done,” she said.

The rules made by the World Runners Association — the organization that validates around-the-world journeys — entail running a minimum distance

of about 16,300 miles (26,232 kilometers) in a continuous direction, crossing four continents from ocean to ocean and finishing where the run began.

Leautey elected to run the 16,300 miles across Europe, Australia, North America and South America.

On average, she runs a marathon, or about 26.2 miles, per day regardless of weather conditions. She has run almost 10,988 miles of her 16,300-mile goal, which Leautey said she will surpass by a lot.

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Marie Leautey, a 44-year-old French woman who is on a journey to run around the world, pushes a 65-pound stroller Thursday after her daily run. Leautey arrived Friday in Jamestown.

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# LEAUTEY

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She runs for six consecutive days before taking a day off. It takes her about 4 hours and 40 minutes to complete her daily marathon.

Only six people have completed the run, and she is attempting to become the second woman to accomplish this feat.

## Why run around the world?

Leautey said she is running around the world because she wanted “to see the world,” which she wanted to do when she was younger. Over the past 20 years, she has lived in Scotland and England in the United Kingdom, Germany,

Switzerland, Greece and Singapore, where she has lived since 2012.

“What I’m doing now is probably the pinnacle of it,” she said. “How best to see the world and to go on my own two feet and see everything. I think it is a continuation from what I’ve always been doing.”

Leautey said she was inspired by other people who enjoyed being outdoors when she was in Greece. She saw the marathon at the Summer Olympics right outside her office in Greece and ran her first marathon four months later.

Leautey, who was working as a chief financial officer four years ago, said she could afford to take a break and return to her career.

“I can afford to take

a break and to come back because I’m high enough that it will still be relevant when I come back from break,” she said.

Leautey said she put everything she has into her journey.

“When I finish this journey, my pockets are empty,” she said. “It’s OK. I will be 45. I will be richer from this experience. I still have a solid background to come back to my profession. I will recover even if I’m broke. All I’ve got fits into my stroller.”

Leautey spent two years preparing the routes and seeing if her body can withstand the daily runs. She said she ran everyday from work to her home and used her vacation time to run back-to-back marathons.

“Then I thought it was my time,” she said. “I’m at the peak of my form. It is a leap of faith.”

## Challenges

COVID restrictions in some countries have been a major challenge Leautey has encountered. She said she cannot cross Australia or New Zealand because of a travel ban.

She took different routes in Europe because she could not enter some countries, she said. Her preplanned route in Europe was between 4,000 to 5,000 miles but ended up being 9,600 miles.

“Overall, I’m about one year behind my plan,” she said.

Leautey runs whether it rains or snows or if the temperatures are

high or low, she said. Her biggest obstacle with weather is the wind, and she said there was one day when she could not run because the winds were 100 mph.

## Running for a cause

Leautey is also running for Women for Women International UK. She plans on raising \$1 for each kilometer of her run, which is \$26,232.

Women for Women International helps women survivors of war rebuild their lives, according to its website.

Leautey said she realizes she is doing something “extraordinary.”

“Some people need to see a woman that can do about anything,” she said. “There are no limitations. The only lim-

itations are in our mind. I’m proving it everyday. Now how can it be of use for anyone else.”

She said women survivors of war need “extraordinary confidence” and she wants to help them think differently of themselves.

“I could have chosen many different causes, but I think this one was important to me because there is a direct correlation between what I am doing and the effect it can have on them,” she said.

To donate to Leautey’s cause, Women for Women International, visit [lootie-run.com/how-to-help](http://lootie-run.com/how-to-help) and click on the “Donate” link.

To read more about her journey, visit [lootie-run.com](http://lootie-run.com).

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