



NEWS LOCAL

Pair of Peterborough hikers spending month on litter cleanup mission along 650-km Portuguese Way of the Camino de Santiago



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Local hikers Rochelle Archibald and Michael Byrne stay in shape at Millennium Park on Tuesday May 12, 2015 in Peterborough, Ont. The Canadian Backpackers will be heading to Portugal from May 20th to June 14th to pick up litter on the historic Camino Route. Their European project titled 'The Great Camino Cleanup aims to remove trash along the 650 kilometre camino route from Lisbon, Portugal to Santiago, Spain. Clifford Skarstedt/Peterborough Examiner/Postmedia Network

Their mission may take them far from home, but two Peterborough residents hope cleaning up a European historic site will help draw attention to a worldwide issue.

Rochelle Archibald, 28, and Michael Byrne, 22, are preparing to set out on a nearly month-long litter pick-up along the Portuguese Way of the Camino de Santiago.

The Camino de Santiago is an ancient path with six trails stretching across Europe, all winding up in Santiago, Spain.

From May 20 to June 14, Archibald and Byrne will be collecting litter along the 650-kilometre trek that runs from Lisbon, Portugal to Santiago.

Archibald is the executive director of A Greener Future, a local non-profit that focuses on litter cleanup, prevention and education, and her boyfriend Byrne is a chef at The BrickHouse on Water St.

She recently organized a Butt Blitz, with residents in cities across Canada collecting more than 87,000 cigarette butts - 3,000 of which came from Peterborough.

The filters were then sent to TerraCycle, a company that turns waste into affordable green products.

"They sterilized them and melted them into plastic skids for industrial use, instead of them all going to the landfill," said Archibald.

But now, the couple has set their sights on a bigger task, The Great Camino Cleanup.

By cleaning up a historical site, which draws tourists from around the globe, Archibald said she thinks it'll make what they're doing more attention grabbing.

"It gets more people involved, because litter isn't just a problem here, it's a problem everywhere."

When Archibald approached CaminoWays.com (a travel company that specializes in planning adventure tours on the trails) with the idea for the cleanup, they jumped on board, offering to sponsor their tour. The duo will be staying in hostels along the trek, and providing updates of their journey on A Greener Future's Facebook page and on Twitter.

"We count everything and we tally it and we'll post that regularly when we're on our trip."

They're also organizing some cleanups along the route and hope to raise awareness among locals in communities they pass through.

"We're just trying to get people involved and get them to understand the impacts of litter and how it affects people and wildlife and our ecosystems."

NOTE: To follow the couple on Facebook, go to fb.com/thegreenerteam and for tweets, check out [@agreenerteam](https://twitter.com/agreenerteam).
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