



For Immediate Release

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Dedicated Doctor and Wife, 69, Hit the Pavement: Will Walk and Bike across America
in Support of Gerda Weissmann Klein's Citizenship Mission

A 3,500-mile Journey to Encourage Civic Participation and Raise Funds for Citizenship Counts

Phoenix, AZ (November 28, 2011) On January 27, 2012, Citizenship Counts Board Member Diane Eckstein and her husband John will begin a cross-country journey with their dog, Kipp, walking and biking 3,500 miles to promote engaged citizenship and awareness of the naturalization process and to raise \$3.5 million to advance Citizenship Counts' efforts.

A Journey that Counts, will kick-off in San Diego, California and will finish in New York City, where the Statue of Liberty stands as a beacon of hope for many Americans.

Citizenship Counts, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization headquartered in Phoenix, Arizona, was founded by Gerda Weissmann Klein as her way of giving back to the country that saved her life. Klein is a celebrated author, Holocaust survivor, 2010 Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient, and proud naturalized citizen. "To perpetuate the miracle that is America," says Klein, "we must teach our children about its rich history as a nation of immigrants who chose this country and have given meaning to its ideals."

The Ecksteins' inspirations for their upcoming journey are Klein's life and the work of Citizenship Counts. "We are proud to be Americans," the Ecksteins say, "and hope that our *Journey* will inspire and educate young people to be good, participating citizens."

Throughout the *Journey* route, Citizenship Counts will provide middle and high school classrooms with the Citizenship Counts curriculum, free of charge. The multi-disciplinary lessons teach students about their rights and responsibilities as citizens of our country and how immigration has created a diverse and inclusive America.

A Journey that Counts will travel through the following cities: San Diego, CA; Tucson, AZ; Phoenix AZ; Las Cruces, NM; Austin, TX; College Station, TX; Dallas, TX; Little Rock, AR; Nashville, TN; Indianapolis, IN; Chicago, IL; Pittsburgh, PA; Washington, D.C.; Philadelphia, PA; and New York City, NY.

In each city, community members will participate in naturalization ceremonies or other celebrations of citizenship and civic engagement. The Ecksteins will maintain a blog where supporters can track their progress. Their dog, Kipp, will have his own blog, describing his experiences as he travels across America.

Dr. John Eckstein has been a primary care physician for 38 years. For the past 24 years, he has worked with Mayo Clinic Arizona. He and his wife, Diane, learned from their parents that American freedom is an extraordinary gift and that our country offers tremendous opportunities. They are dedicated to Citizenship Counts' mission to help young Americans understand the blessings of American citizenship and become active in their communities.

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About Citizenship Counts

Citizenship Counts is a national, nonpartisan 501(c)(3) organization, whose mission is to educate youth on the tenets of American citizenship and encourage them to appreciate and celebrate diversity in the classroom, community, and country. <http://citizenshipcounts.org>

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