

Running to make a difference

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WHEN Graham Furman was a child, he watched his father complete a marathon on his 40th birthday.

Three decades later Furman will be following in his dad's footsteps by running the Melbourne Marathon in early October for his own 40th birthday.

In lieu of birthday gifts, Furman will instead be raising much-needed funds for the Oakleigh Centre, an organisation supporting people with an intellectual disability.

After reaching his fundraising

goal of \$1000 in a matter of weeks, Furman says the sky is the limit.

"I'll never stop at a certain target, the sector is badly in need of money because of how hard money is to come by," Furman told *The AJN*.

Furman has been working in the disability sector for over a decade and after starting his own family and becoming a father to Bialik College students Bella, 6, and Lexi, 3, Furman remains a staunch advocate for people awareness.

"I'm very passionate about disability and advocating for rights for people with disabilities and supporting them to have meaningful participation in whatever

activities they choose," he said.

Furman has been training for the marathon for a good part of two years since realising this is what he wanted to do.

Every dollar raised will go towards the Oakleigh Centre and the programs they run for their clients.

"We focus on people getting out into the community and run our activities outside of the Centre and within the wider community," Furman said.

The father of two said he will undertake the 42km run with full knowledge that every dollar he raises will go towards providing

for the people who need it.

"We do have Jewish clients that we service and we incorporate Jewish themes into the programs and respect everyone's culture."

"For example, we light a menorah every day on Chanukah and our Jewish clients help us light it if they so wish," Furman said.

As the soon-to-be 40-year-old crosses the finish line in early October, Furman said he can't wait to see his children waiting for him, much like he was for his own dad all those years ago.

To donate go to www.oakleighcentre.org.au/fundraising/marathon.



Graham Furman and his daughter Bella training for the Melbourne Marathon.