**New online community connects women who walk**

17 April 2018, York – A new online community – Glamoraks® - has been created to make it easy for women to go walking, hiking or adventuring together. The social network, trialled in March 2018 and now available online and as a mobile phone app, connects women with similar walking abilities to others near them or in places they’re visiting around the world.

Glamoraks® was created by York-based Melissa Talago (45), who spotted a gap in the market for a community that caters to busy women who juggle kids, careers and aging parents but who crave some time to themselves in the great outdoors.

‘Walking is proven to have health and stress-relieving benefits. It is particularly useful for mental health, low mood, and illness recovery and is a gentle way to boost fitness and lose weight. These are all issues that post-natal, peri-menopausal and menopausal women face. Yet most walking groups seem to be aimed at younger, less-time pressed adventurers or an older, retired demographic. What was missing was the bit in the middle,’ explains Melissa.

Glamoraks® makes it easy for women to find others to walk with whenever they feel the need for their outdoor fix, but who would prefer not to walk alone. They simply post a walk suggestion for a given day and invite others to join them. Direct messaging in the platform means they can finalise walk arrangements, and an article feature enables them to share their route, pictures or thoughts afterwards to inspire others. They can even buy and sell second hand hiking kit, find someone to join them on a big hiking challenge or arrange a wild camp expedition.

‘You’re far more likely to go for your walk if you’ve made an arrangement to meet someone, rather than letting life get in the way. It’s also a great way to make new friends and beat loneliness. Hearing about other people’s lives and sharing your own stories while walking helps you feel more grounded, connected and less alone,’ says Melissa.

It was her own walking experiences that gave Melissa the idea for Glamoraks®.

‘In 2015, I had a weekend to myself. I walked 14 miles along the Yorkshire coast on my own, stayed in a hostel in a shared dorm overnight and then walked back the next day. I loved it! It sparked a sense of adventure in me and genuinely lifted my mood.

‘I began to take my friends out with me, but they weren’t always available. While I find the solitude of walking alone relaxing, not everyone feels that way, and having other women to chat to makes it more fun. I realised that there must be many other women who want to get out walking but don’t always have anyone to go with, so I set up Glamoraks®,’ she explains.

The group started on Facebook in January 2017 but in March 2018, migrated onto its own stand-alone community platform that makes it easier to find women in their area with similar abilities. Melissa believes that niche social networking sites like this will become increasingly popular as the large social networks like Facebook become noisy, distracting and hard to navigate.

Within the Glamoraks® community, women can:

* Find members near them
* Find members with the same ability level or interest
* Find and create groups by location
* Set up or join in with a walk
* Share pictures, polls or questions
* Share articles, blogs, tips or walking routes
* Search by topic
* Chat and direct message other members
* Get access to members-only arranged walks and events
* Get exclusive member discounts for walk-related products and services

The new platform gained 1200 initial members in it in just three weeks, with the majority coming from the UK. But there is a growing international contingent with members from the USA, Canada, Chile, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia, Italy, France, Sweden, Austria, Switzerland and the Czech Republic.

‘I want to get women from around the world sharing the walks they do near them. I’m hoping it will inspire women to try walks in new countries, meet like-minded women from around the world and rediscover their inner adventurer, even if their adventure includes a comfy bed and a nice glass of wine at the end of it,’ says Melissa.

Future plans include branded merchandise, training & navigation courses, How To sessions with experts and additional Glamoraks® walking weekends or challenges.

To join, go to [www.glamoraks.com](http://www.glamoraks.com). Membership costs $4.99 per month.

ENDS

**Notes for editors**

Melissa Talago is available for interview. A range of images of women walking is available too. Please email:

hello@glamoraks.com or call 07944914917.

More information can be found at [www.glamoraks.com](http://www.glamoraks.com) and a direct link to the platform can be found at <https://glamoraks.mn.co>

**About Glamoraks®**

Glamoraks® was founded in January 2017 as a Facebook group. It moved to a Mighty Networks platform in March 2018 as a trial, with soft launch in April. 1000 members joined in the first three weeks. It is a global women-only online community designed to empower women to get out walking, hiking and adventuring. It is open to women from around the world of all ages and abilities, although most members fall into the 35 – 60 age range.

It was founded by Melissa Talago, a marketing communications expert and amateur walker. Since heading off on her first solo walk in 2015, Melissa has:

* walked the Coast to Coast – 192 miles
* walked the circumference of the Isle of Wight – 70 miles
* walked the West Highland Way – 96 miles
* did the London Moon Walk – 26 miles overnight
* climbed Snowdon
* climbed Mount Kilimanjaro
* wild camped solo
* bivvied on a cliff with a hurricane approaching
* set up and run three Glamoraks walking weekends
* achieved a straight to silver navigation qualification
* done countless day walks

Melissa is a regular news reviewer on BBC Radio York, mother of two teenage boys and runs [www.campfirecommunications.co.uk](http://www.campfirecommunications.co.uk), a marketing communications business.