

Team to Climb 14,179-foot Mountain for Breast Cancer Prevention

Breast Cancer Fund's Climb Against the Odds 10th mountain expedition on Mt. Shasta begins June 18

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MT. SHASTA— The Breast Cancer Fund's Climb Against the Odds 2013 team, made up of 28 breast cancer survivors and people touched by the disease, is in its final stages of preparation for the June 18 expedition on Northern California's 14,179-foot Mount Shasta. The event raises funds to support the Breast Cancer Fund's work to prevent breast cancer by eliminating our exposure to toxic chemicals and radiation linked to the disease.

The 2013 Climb Against the Odds team hails from eight states: California, Colorado, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Missouri, Oregon and Pennsylvania. The participants have trained in regional teams since January, and will come together from June 15 to 21 at Mt. Shasta, the second-highest peak in the Cascade Range, measuring several hundred feet short of Mt. Rainier. The summit attempt will occur on June 19.

Each team member has very personal motivations to climb—to honor her own or her loved ones' experience with cancer—and all climbers share a commitment to breast cancer prevention.

For Leslie Vanoni, from Sonoma, Calif., attempting to reach the summit will be a personal celebration of getting through her breast cancer treatments, as well as a tribute to the courage of those who have faced or lost their lives to this disease.

Leslie was diagnosed with breast cancer for the first time on her twin daughters' fourth birthdays. Her girls watched their mother cry as her hair fell out, they saw the fear in her eyes, they saw her deteriorate—both physically and emotionally. In remission, Leslie participated in Climb Against the Odds last year, but didn't reach the summit because of acute altitude sickness. This year, she has grown even stronger and she's determined to make it to the top of Mt. Shasta. Her teenage daughter Bridget will climb alongside her.

"My girls ask me all the time if they will get breast cancer," Vanoni said. "I wish I knew that the answer was no, but I don't. What I do know is that the Breast Cancer Fund is working every day to make sure fewer people ever have to get the terrible diagnosis. And I know I will continue to do what I can to support this work."

There will be four Siskiyou County climbers: Jennifer Bray of Etna, Linda Chitwood of Mt. Shasta, Paul Engstrom of Mt. Shasta and Johanna D'Arcy of Yreka.

Paul Engstrom of Mt. Shasta, joined the team because he believes in the Breast Cancer Fund's mission of prevention. "I don't like heights, cold or going fast on snow (glissading). I'm too old to be climbing up the side of a mountain. I never had the slightest desire to climb Mt. Shasta." Then Engstrom learned more about the Breast Cancer Fund's prevention mission, and he lost a friend to breast cancer. "She was in her forties, and that was too young. The next thing I knew, I had decided to climb."

Read about all 28 of the amazing climbers at <http://www.breastcancerfund.org/events/climb-against-the-odds/meet-the-2013-climb-against-the-odds-team.html>.

An alarming 1 in 8 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer, and only half of these cases can be tied to traditional risk factors like genetic inheritance, diet and reproductive history. More and more scientific evidence is linking breast cancer to the chemicals in our everyday environment—chemicals in our food, our products, our air and our water. More than 80,000 synthetic chemicals are registered for use in the United States. Fewer than 10 percent have ever been fully tested for their health effects. The Breast Cancer Fund is the only national breast

cancer organization focused solely on breast cancer prevention through working to identify and eliminate the environmental causes.

“The Breast Cancer Fund embraces mountain climbing as a metaphor for the critical work we are doing to prevent the environmental causes of this devastating disease,” said Jeanne Rizzo, R.N., president and CEO of the Breast Cancer Fund. “We apply our courage and faith that anything is possible, if taken one step at a time. And we do it all as part of a team, knowing that there is more that we can achieve together than apart.”

Sponsors of the Climb are LUNA, Clif Bar Family Foundation, The North Face, Klean Kanteen, Ahnu, Osprey Packs, Seventh Generation, Ibex, Adventure Medical Kits, Leki, Smartwool, Outdoor Research, Sterling Rope, Princeton Tec and Autodesk.

This climb follows in the tradition of the Breast Cancer Fund’s past expeditions: Mt. Aconcagua, Argentina (1995); Mt. McKinley, Alaska (1998); Mt Fuji, Japan (2000), Mt. Rainier, Wash. (2005), and Mt. Shasta, Calif. (2003-04; 2006-12).

Follow the Climb’s progress at the Breast Cancer Fund’s blog www.insideprevention.org.

Get more event information at www.breastcancerfund.org/events/climb-against-the-odds/.

Read climber bios at www.breastcancerfund.org/events/climb-against-the-odds/meet-the-2012-climb-against-the-odds-team.html.

Donate to the Climb at www.breastcancerfund.org/events/climb-against-the-odds/.

Sign up for next year’s climb at <http://www.breastcancerfund.org/events/climb-against-the-odds/apply.html>

To set up an interview or to get photos, please contact Rebecca Wolfson,
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