

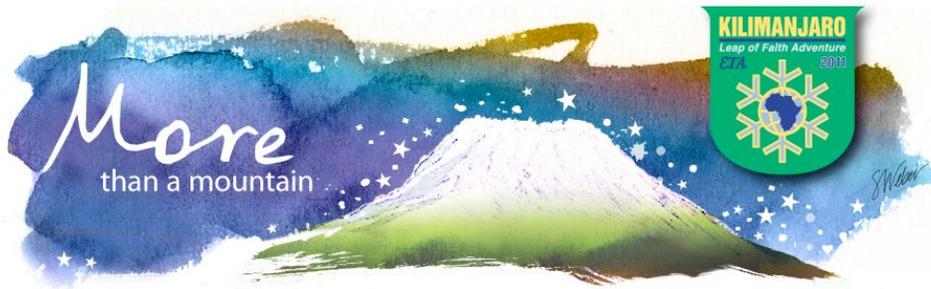
## Tremendous achievement secured by climbers with Multiple Sclerosis or Parkinson's disease today as they conquered Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest free-standing mountain in the world!

Uhuru Peak, Kilimanjaro, Tanzania, Africa – July 18, 2011 – Today, seven adventurous men and women with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) and four with Parkinson's disease (PD), along with nine climbing companions, reached the highest peak in Africa. This is the first time that a group of people with both of these neurodegenerative diseases have united as a committed team to reach a summit this high, all whilst showing solidarity in supporting one another every step of the way. This climb clearly demonstrated that neurodegenerative diseases do not represent the end of 'normal' life, but that people living with the diseases can in fact go on to achieve staggering feats. Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania stands at 19,340 feet, not only making it the highest peak in Africa, but also the highest free-standing mountain in the world.

"This 'Kilimanjaro Leap of Faith Adventure' was meant to challenge the body, expand the mind and foster courage in dealing with the diagnosis of a neurodegenerative disease. There have been some really tough parts of the trek, especially altitude sickness, for which there is nothing you can do. Imagine that on top of our neurodegenerative diseases. But, we've made it and that's a credit to all of us who believe that we can go beyond the limitations of our disease and still achieve incredible results, both physically and mentally. We have remembered all those with neurodegenerative disease who climb personal mountains each day, as we have taken the steps to this summit," said trip organiser Lori Schneider, founder of Empowerment Through Adventure.

The climbing group comprises a number of wonderful and diverse individuals. There are musicians, teachers, adventurers, philanthropists, sports enthusiasts, psychologists, social workers, artists, program managers, engineers, parents, and many other unique individuals among the brave people with MS, PD and their climbing companions. The medical team includes an MS researcher and biochemist, a neurologist, a physician's assistant, physical therapists, sports trainers and the medically trained staff from the climbing company, Alpine Ascents International. Most of the group already enjoy outdoor activities and they have all dedicated themselves to training to prepare themselves for this challenge and adventure. A key attribute of the group is their outstandingly positive outlook, regardless of the hurdles they face, and their unwavering commitment to supporting one another throughout the trip.

"What this wonderful group of people with MS and Parkinson's disease has done is incredible. When I was first diagnosed with MS I ran away from my life in fear. I left a 22 year marriage, a 20 year teaching career, sold my house, left my community, and tried to run from my MS diagnosis. That changed when I reached the top of the world, becoming the first person with MS to reach the summit of Mount Everest.



The idea behind the Kilimanjaro Leap of Faith Adventure was for me to share the lessons I have learned about believing in yourself and following your dreams. I think it's worked!" Continued Lori Schneider.

The Kilimanjaro climb has certainly had its challenges. Some have suffered from altitude sickness, occasionally worsened by the symptoms of their neurodegenerative disease. It is for this reason that three people with MS and five of the climbing companions did not reach the summit. However, everyone has assisted and supported each other every step of the way. All have gone beyond their limitations to redefine who they are and what they are capable of achieving.

Communication activities for the Kilimanjaro Leap of Faith Adventure 2011 are kindly supported by Sanofi.

The "More than a mountain" artwork has been created by Susie Weber.

For team member profiles, daily updates, visuals and podcasts from the MS / PD climbers and their companions, please visit: <http://www.EmpowermentThroughAdventure.com/Kilimicrosite.htm> or [www.EmpowermentThroughAdventure.com](http://www.EmpowermentThroughAdventure.com)

#### About Empowerment Through Adventure

Lori Schneider started Empowerment Through Adventure to organise adventure activities for others who would like to challenge themselves, step outside of their comfort zone and feel empowered in their own lives. The Kilimanjaro Leap of Faith Adventure is meant to challenge the body, expand the mind and foster courage in dealing with the diagnosis of a neurological disease.

For further information on Empowerment Through Adventure, please visit: [www.EmpowermentThroughAdventure.com](http://www.EmpowermentThroughAdventure.com)

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