



Team Everest '03 Challenge Trek Team Members

The Challenge Trek team is comprised of a group of resolute individuals with diverse disabilities. The team embodies the qualities of responsibility, leadership, determination and strength. By trekking to the 17,500ft base camp of the world's highest peak, the team will "Challenge the Myth" that people with disabilities are not capable.

Along with assistants, medical staff and the finest Sherpa in the world, the Challenge Trek team will arrive in Kathmandu, Nepal in March 2003 and begin their 3-week trek to Everest base camp. They will assist the Summit team in climb preparations and the building of a fully accessible base camp.

What they have to say

Matt, a person with paraplegia

I want to be a part of Team Everest '03 to prove to myself and to others that limitations come from within. By making it, we are defeating the limitations that others put on us simply for being disabled. We can prove that our hearts can do what our limbs may be restricted from doing.

Gene, a person with quadriplegia

I seek adventure. I enjoy uncertainty. What I'm really seeking is an experience of being alive, so that my life experiences on the purely physical plane will have resonance within my own innermost being and reality, so that I actually feel the rapture of being alive.

Renata, whose leg was amputated as a child

Although I am "disabled", I have fought this label my whole life. On a macro level, I will be helping to educate people around the world about individuals with disabilities. In my work and my life, I have tried to do this on an individual basis. TE '03 will allow me to impact hundreds if not thousands of individuals at once. It's an opportunity of a lifetime both individually and professionally.

Kim, a person with hip dysphasia, fibromyalgia and bi-polar condition

I want to go for every child told they were too uncoordinated to dance, for every person told after an injury they would never recover and have use of a limb, for every person with mental illness who has lived with the stigma, for every child told they cannot be part of a team because they do things differently.

Dinesh, a person with a leg amputation

Being an amputee is only a small part of who I am and it doesn't reflect what I can or cannot do. I realize my limitations are solely dependent on my attitude. The worst thing that anybody in my situation could do is to let this wonderful opportunity slip away.

Barry, a person with quadriplegia

After the initial personal excitement, I started thinking that I could possibly start another project - a sports complex for people with disabilities - through the anticipated publicity associated with the expedition. I am encouraged and motivated by seeing other people with disabilities trying to do the "impossible". I also want to encourage and motivate other people, able-bodied and disabled, so they know that anything can be accomplished if you put your mind and body to it.

Dennis Borel

Project Director, USA
Executive Director, Coalition
of Texans with Disabilities

Gary Guller

Expedition Leader

The People of Team Everest '03



Executive Summary:

The Coalition of Texans with Disabilities (CTD), founded in 1978, is an IRS-approved 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring that people with disabilities enjoy equal opportunities to live, learn, work, play, and participate fully in the community of their choice. CTD continues to fight the discrimination and stereotypes that face individuals with disabilities in almost every aspect of their lives.

Dennis Borel

Project Director, USA
Executive Director, Coalition
of Texans with Disabilities

In order to shatter those stereotypes and foster a better understanding of the capabilities of people with disabilities and raise funding and awareness for disability related issues, CTD is organizing **Team Everest '03**. Team Everest '03 will culminate in the Spring 2003 expedition to the world's highest peak.

Gary Guller

Expedition Leader

The terrific individual and team stories of Team Everest '03 will take place during the 50th anniversary of the first summit of Everest by Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay in 1953, which will bring added public interest. Team Everest '03 will draw parallels to the commemoration with 50 years of progress of people with disabilities and will challenge the myth that having a disability equates to a lack of capability and potential.

In March 2003, a diverse Challenge Trek team representing a variety of disabilities will begin the 30 mile trek to the 17,500' base camp of Mt. Everest deep in the heart of the Nepal Himalaya. The Summit Team, led by a person with a disability, will then attempt their climb to the 29,035' peak of Everest.

Team Members:

Project Leadership:

Dennis Borel, Project Director: Dennis is Executive Director of CTD and has 20 years experience as a senior manager of non-profit organizations, including fundraising and project management. He will remain in the USA during the expedition.

Gary Guller, Expedition Leader: Gary is an internationally-known mountaineer and co-owner/operator of Arun Expeditions, with offices in Austin, Texas, and Kathmandu, Nepal, and has been a climber most of his life. In 1986 while on a climb in Mexico, Gary fell, resulting in a broken neck and the amputation of his left arm. After several years of undergoing risky surgery and rehabilitation, he resumed climbing. Gary has climbed Lhotse, 4th highest peak in the world, and Aconcagua, highest mountain in the Americas. He has led countless climbs in the Nepal Himalaya over ten years and attempted Everest with the 2001 *Anything Is Possible* expedition. As Team Everest '03 Expedition Leader, Gary will lead both the Challenge Trek Team and the Summit Team. If Gary summits with Team Everest '03, he will become the first person with only one arm to achieve the world's highest peak.

Joni Rogers, Logistics Coordinator: Joni is co-owner/operator of Arun Expeditions. Since 1997, Joni has coordinated and led numerous trekking expeditions in Mongolia, Nepal, and Africa.

Summit Team:

Mike Trueman, Expedition Co-Leader: Mike has led expeditions around the world for over twenty-five years. Mike served as an officer in the British Army Gurkha Rifles and he is a fluent Nepalese speaker. Mike is highly respected in the mountaineering community for his safety and experience, which came to the fore in 1996, when he was asked to go from the higher Camp 2 to coordinate the rescue from Base Camp following a storm, which led to the much-publicized tragedy high on the mountain. Mike successfully summited Everest in 1999 and served as expedition leader on the Everest 2001 "Anything is Possible" expedition.

Gary Scott, Climbing Leader: Gary has spent over twenty years of his life climbing and exploring much of the world, including over 30 trips to the Himalayas. He is the world-record holder for the fastest ascent of Alaska's Mt. McKinley, climbing it alone in a super human 18 ½ hours. He was a member of the successful 1991 American Everest Expedition. During that expedition, Gary attempted a world record one-day ascent, alone and without oxygen.

Nima Dawa Sherpa, Technical Climbing Sherpa: Nima Dawa is a technical climbing guide of the 8,000m peaks in Nepal and a highly skilled ice climber. He has summited Everest via the South Pillar route with the 2000 Danish Expedition and summited Cho Oyu in Tibet in May 2002.

Kipa Sherpa, Expedition Sirdar: Kipa was born and grew up in Nepal's Solu Khumbu and has been climbing all his life. With ascents of Nepal's highest peaks, including Everest (which he has summited three times, including the southwest face), Kanchenjunga, Lhotse, Dhaulagiri and most trekking peaks.

Challenge Trek Team: A group of resolute individuals with diverse disabilities, the Challenge Trek team embodies the qualities of responsibility, leadership, determination and strength. By trekking to the 17,500' base camp of the world's highest peak, this team will promote a deeper understanding of the capabilities of people with disabilities.

Gene Rodgers: Gene is a world traveler extraordinaire and seeks adventure, having visited over 30 countries. He has enjoyed diverse recreational activities ranging from skydiving to scuba diving to trekking in the Himalayas, and looks forward to seeing Everest again in 2003. Gene, a person with quadriplegia, comes from Cleveland, Ohio and currently lives in Austin, Texas.

Renata Domatti: As a child, Renata's leg was amputated due to bone cancer. Now a medical social worker in Houston, Renata will do the Challenge Trek without a prosthesis.

Mark Gobble: As a teacher of history at the Texas School for the Deaf, he frequently teaches a unit on Everest. Deaf himself, Mark is currently developing a website and an interactive curriculum where schools and programs for the deaf and hard-of-hearing will be able to follow Team Everest, and to study cultural and environmental issues of Everest.

Christine Kane: She is a teacher of the hearing impaired, and has a great passion for adventure, all making her perfectly suited for the role of sign language interpreter for the TE'03 expedition.

Sandra Murgia: Sandra is a retired veteran of the US Navy and an avid hiker and is experienced in rappelling. Sandra has reflex sympathetic dystrophy with arthritis and walks with a cane and leg brace, a result of injuries suffered in Operation Desert Storm.

Barry Muth: Barry is a person with quadriplegia and has participated in the American Veterans Winter Sports Clinic in Colorado for the last two years. He also plays rugby.

Ted Holmes: Ted has worked as a Ski Instructor & Clinician for the National Sports Center for the Disabled. He is participating in Team Everest '03 as Barry's assistant. An avid mountain biker and hiker, Ted has backpacked the Grand Canyon rim to rim.

Joe Paschall: Joe has never let his visual impairment get in the way of an active life. For years he has coached student athletes with disabilities. Joe also rode a tandem bicycle across Russia, and continues to be an avid snow skier.

Dinesh Ranasinghe: Dinesh is a right leg – above the knee – amputee, who loves all outdoor activities. He participates in both basketball and football tournaments. He was presented the "Male Athlete of the Year" award by the Warm Springs Sports Program.

Dana Roach: Dana trekked in the Khumbu region in Nepal in 2000. Dana has been an Emergency Medical Technician for 12 years.

Matt Standridge: Matt is a person with paraplegia, resulting from a broken back in a motorcycle accident. His athletic pursuits include basketball, rugby, football, softball, water skiing and weight training.

Christine White: She has traveled to many countries in Europe and North Africa and has spent the last twenty years exploring the back roads of Mexico. Christine has a moderate to severe hearing loss.

Kim Smith: Kim is a person with hip dysphasia and a bi-polar condition. She is a disability advocacy coordinator and is a long-time adult leader with the Boy Scouts.

Julie Reagan: Julie is a medical wonder. She is a person with cerebral palsy, which is a permanent brain injury sustained at birth, and did not walk, speak or write until age 30. Her doctor has no medical explanation for her improvement to walking, speaking clearly and writing. Julie holds a Master's Degree in Education and Counseling.