

What They Have to Say: Team Everest '03 Challenge Trek Team Members

Matt, a person with paraplegia:

I would like to be a part of Team Everest '03 to prove to myself and others that limitations come from within. By making it, you are defeating the limitations that others put on you simply for being disabled. You can prove to them that your heart can do what your 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 resonances 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 would 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. Team Everest '03 would 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 can not do. I realize my limitations are solely dependent on my attitude. The worst thing that anybody in my situation could do is to not try and let this wonderful opportunity slip away.

Barry, a person with quadriplegia:

Immediately 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 that would be 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, abled body and disabled, so they know that anything can be accomplished if you put your mind and body to it.

In March 2003, a 15 member team of people with diverse disabilities will leave for Mt. Everest. Known as the Challenge Trek Team, the group will trek to Everest Base Camp at 17,500 feet. A small team of high altitude climbers will then attempt the summit, led by mountaineer Gary Guller, a person with an amputation. The purpose of Team Everest '03 is to promote the capabilities of people with disabilities and to support the ongoing disability advocacy work of the non-profit Coalition of Texans with Disabilities (CTD). Call CTD at 512/478-3366 or check our website at www.teameverest03.org