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Woman's climb helps children to new heights

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12 hours ago

by Emily Canning-Dean

Reporter



Twinsburg -- When city resident Monica Schandel learned about Big City Mountaineers, a program that funds outdoor trips for underprivileged urban teens, she knew she wanted to climb on board.

But with most of the program's activities simply too far away to be involved directly, Schandel decided to raise money for the organization using her own rarefied skill set -- through Summit For Someone, an organization formed to raise funds for BCM.

On June 5, Schandel and five others will climb more than 14,000 feet up Mount Shasta in the Cascade Mountains in California to raise money for Big City Mountaineers.

"Volunteers [at BCM] take teens on backpacking trips," Schandel said. "I wanted to volunteer, but I found out the organization wants volunteers who live within a certain distance of where the trips take place."

Hillary Harding, spokesperson for Big City Mountaineers, said proceeds raised from Schandel's climb will be used to operate the program and purchase equipment for teens. Schandel added she set her fundraising goal for the climb at \$3,600.

"These teens often have limited resources, so we don't want to ask them to purchase items for backpacking that they would never use again," Harding said.

Harding said Big City Mountaineers has been leading seven-day mentoring programs for 20 years at 14 different mountain locations, including spots in California and Colorado.

"This gives the teens a chance to experience the wilderness as well as talk to their mentors about issues such as goals and consequences," Harding said.

Harding said Summit for Someone leads similar climbs from May through September to raise funds for BCM so teens can go on these trips.

Schandel, who teaches spinning at the Twinsburg Fitness Center, already has ascents of Mount Rainier in Washington and Mount Kilimanjaro in Africa notched on her climbing resumé. She said Mount Shasta may be a more aggressive climb because parts of the mountain may be snow-covered.

Schandel plans to train by doing some local rock climbing, and will continue to have her own personal, lofty goals.

"I want to climb Mount McKinley," she said. McKinley, in Alaska, is the highest mountain in the United States.

To donate to the program through Schandel, log on to www.summitforsomeone.org.

E-mail: ecanning@recordpub.com

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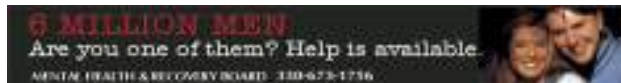
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