



# VENTURES VOICES

Special Feature: Mt. Kilimanjaro

Volume 4 Issue 1



## Climb for Community Living

On February 17, 2006, twenty people with developmental disabilities and 20 of their supporters, stood on the roof of Africa, 19,341 feet in the sky, having achieved a great mental, physical and emotional accomplishment: Two of those people are our own Rochelle Paquin and Steven Braak.



There are challenges and then there are challenges. Mt Kilimanjaro conquered by our team!

Rochelle and Steven Reach their Goal



### Jambo! Jambo! Tanzania

Hi this is Laney calling on behalf of all the BCACL team on Mount Kilimanjaro, "To our family and friends we love you and miss you. We are all together; we've just come across the Shira Ridge and had a wonderful lunch. Tonight we will be sleeping at 13,100 feet (3992 m) at Moir Camp. At this mornings team meeting we all had bright smiles and everyone had two thumbs up and all were looking forward to a good day.

It was a really cold night but there was a beautiful full moon right over the mountain which was absolutely majestic and it gave us inspiration to work harder to get up to the top. We were snug in our tents, even though it was a crispy, cold night.

We are looking so forward to telling you all the great stories about the new friends we're making and to tell you how wonderful the staff is to us. Every day is just a new experience for us."



United Way of the Lower Mainland IT'S ABOUT PEOPLE

SEVEN SUMMITS

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*Moving onward toward our ominous goal! (live transmissions from BCACL team members)*

Ask somebody some day who has been to Kilimanjaro about the day they crossed the Baranco, it's the prettiest day of walking or trekking on Kilimanjaro. This trail we just did today is stunning. It's really gorgeous.

Looming above us through the clouds right now and we've seen it since we've arrived and I don't know if we'll see it in the morning is the giant breach wall of Kilimanjaro with those huge glaciers hanging off. This is really an inspiring and exciting place

It's great and amazing that this crew of 43 BCACL climbers from British Columbia is here after the traverse across Kilimanjaro so far. Every day is long, believe me. We arrive into camp hours apart, we always travel at our own pace and of course with 20 Berg Adventures guides and a lot of other Tanzanian staff that are helping us it's easy to do that. They swarm around the people coming in and congratulate them. There are tears coming down their faces every time this happens when everybody comes in. It's an inspiring and heart warming scene.

Everyone knows who we are; we've been the talk of the mountain. Everyone gives us high fives especially with the porters and guides from the other teams. Our adventure every step of the way is just worth its own effort and its own reward. We are thinking of everybody back home but of course we're still dreaming of higher places, moving on toward Uhuru Peak. It's a great day on the top of Africa. Wonderful things are happening for a team that deserves it. This is Wally Berg calling you from Berg Adventures International for the BCACL team from the top of Kilimanjaro, Uhuru or Freedom Point on the 17th of February.

This team has performed wonderfully; words can't describe how proud I am of all of them. The rest of us decided to go all the way up to the very top and now I'm pleased to say that slowly one by one and in small little groups I watched Rochelle, Steven and the BCACL team all come to the top and the wonderful Berg Adventures staff that has been helping this group. Tears were abundant as we spent our time up here in the clear African morning.

On our way down having summited, within moments after we all got together, the clouds parted and far, far up above us was the glaciated summit of Kilimanjaro, where 40 of us had been in the last 24 hours to the very top: climbing and having great adventures.



## Notes from the Board—Jim Lacroix

For many people, myself included, Africa is on their list of places they want to visit. An amazing variety of wild life, untamed wilderness and friendly people are all things that come to mind when one thinks of Africa.

Congratulations to Rochelle Paquin and Steven Braak on your hard work and training and for making it to the top of Mount Kilimanjaro! You have done something that very few people have been able to do. You were great representatives of CVS and have shown that individuals who have a developmental disability can do anything if they have the right support and training.

Congratulations also to Mike and all the staff at Community Ventures Society for supporting Rochelle and Steven. While it was two members of CVS who were climbing, the whole organization was behind them providing support and encouragement. Fund raising is not easy, but you found some very creative ways to raise the money.

I am very proud to be a part of CVS. This project was a great way to promote our organization and some of the wonderful people who are a part of it. It was another example of the caring and encouraging atmosphere that I feel when I meet people from CVS in the community.

## Rochelle's Climb up Mt. Kilimanjaro

by Yaulanda Hennessy

Rochelle said she really enjoyed the climb up Mt. Kilimanjaro, but added it was really hard work. The food wasn't very different from what we eat here. The scenery was amazing! There were lush flowers and plants, but as they got higher up it got more barren. There was no snow on the mountain but there were beautiful glaciers.

The Safari was interesting, they saw a lot of animals including two lions, adult and baby elephants, ostriches, zebras, different types of birds and species of animals as well. She said a baboon got into one couples bedroom, they were totally horrified to find a baboon in their bedroom!

There was a swimming pool at the hotel so they got to go swimming! Steven got pushed into the water by one of the other hikers!

They also got to visit a Massai Village and she bought a beaded belt. The Massai wore blanket clothes. The villagers gave her a new hair style. They braided her hair with mauve wool and put on beads.



All in all Steven and Rochelle had a wonderful trip to Mt. Kilimanjaro and give thanks to everyone who supported them on their journey.

## Message from Mike Keating, Executive Director (Climb week)

Rochelle, Steven and all the BCACL Kilimanjaro Trek climbers; your families and everyone associated with Community Ventures and our extended family have been following your amazing adventures on the internet, in our minds, and in our dreams for the last week! Your commitment, hard work, determination and huge hearts have inspired us. In a world deeply cynical you have inspired within each of us a rebirth of wonder. You have rekindled our own capacity to aspire and to accomplish our dreams and aspirations.



Each day we have thrilled to your pictures and words from the other side of planet earth. Like circles within circles, communities within communities, you left your families and communities here in BC. You became a community of adventurers. You formed a new community on Kilimanjaro with the people of Tanzania – your guides, porters and Berg Associates. In doing so you have created a community that encompasses the world. **We thank you for all this.**

