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Colorado Mother and Son Plan Mt. Kilimanjaro Ascent Climb to Fund Education of Poverty-Stricken Girls in Tanzania

On August 1—6, 2009, Karen Davis and her 15 year old son Dustin Levine will travel from their home in Colorado to the African country of Tanzania to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro (19, 340 feet) in a once in a lifetime educational experience.

Karen and Dustin made the decision to travel to Tanzania and climb one of the World's Seven Summits because of a mutual desire to take on a physically challenging task together while also learning about a part of the world that is completely unique to them.

During the research phase of the trip, the mother/son team learned a great deal about Tanzania's extreme poverty and decided to add one more component to their journey – to raise money to help educate impoverished girls in Tanzania.

Through a mutual friend, they heard about Nurturing Minds, a US based non-profit that supports quality education for bright, motivated Tanzanian girls who otherwise would not attend school due to extreme poverty. With initial seed funding, Nurturing Minds opened a day program last year in a borrowed classroom to provide remedial schooling for girls. The goal for the next 12 months is to raise enough funds for a permanent facility where girls can learn in an environment void of hunger or the fear of being abused. 100% of all funds Karen and Dustin raise will go towards the new building.

“Hearing that only one in five kids continue school past 7th grade was really eye opening to me,” said Dustin. “And then when I learned that girls are the last selected for school and the first to drop out because of being forced into manual labor or early marriage made me want to help even more. It's just something I can't believe still happens in this world.”

“The chance for us to challenge ourselves both physically and mentally, while at the same time, make real life change for a group of young girls on another continent, is a confidence builder that we can't get in any other form,” commented Davis.

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Davis started traveling internationally with her children several years ago to encourage them to have an interest in geography and languages and become worldlier in terms of understanding different cultures, people, architecture, history, art, religion and food.

Countless hours are put into planning the trip and all of it is done together. Karen and Dustin utilize programs like Google Earth to research where they want to go, what they want to do, and how they are going to get there. Then they study the local culture, the geography and learn the basics of the language through books and CDs downloaded to their iPods.

“I take just one of my two children at a time and we travel to a place that neither one of us has ever been before,” commented Davis. “This makes for a wonderful bonding experience because inevitably we get lost and are in situations where we have to work together to resolve challenges that neither one of us has ever had to deal with before. My friends have equated it to mother/child team building.”

To learn more about Karen and Dustin’s trip, log onto www.passionforacausekili.com. Karen is a partner at Ingage, Inc., an innovative services firm that energizes leaders, their teams and their talent for extraordinary success and is a sponsor of this trip. Throughout the Kilimanjaro climb, Karen and Dustin will write a blog and post photos of their adventure. To learn more about how you can help bring quality education to underprivileged Tanzanian girls, visit www.nurturingmindsinafrica.org.

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