

UICC climbs Kilimanjaro for new campaign

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Cancer advocate Brosie McCann (Australia) will today begin his ascent up Africa's tallest peak, Mount Kilimanjaro as a representative of the International Union Against Cancer (UICC) to raise awareness of the 2009 World Cancer Campaign "I love my healthy active childhood". He will be joining two time cancer survivor and expert mountaineer Sean Swarner (United States) on the expedition, expecting to reach the summit at 5,895 meters above sea level by 2 August. During this difficult climb, they will find themselves exposed to many different climates from a humid, tropical forest to an icy, dry glacial peak.

This year's campaign, "I love my healthy active childhood," which was launched in February of this year on World Cancer Day, is designed to show people that the choices they make in life, especially in their youth, can help ensure a healthier future and reduce the risks of cancer. "I love my healthy active childhood" is part of the UICC's five-year global campaign "Today's children, tomorrow's world" which is focused on raising awareness of childhood cancer and what can be done to prevent and treat it.

As many as 30-40% of all cancers are thought to be preventable and are largely related to a person's lifestyle. Brosie McCann volunteered his time to UICC for this event in order to serve as a role model for others in order to inspire them towards a healthier lifestyle, which will help decrease their risk of cancer. "I am really excited for this opportunity," said McCann, "it's not every day that you get a chance to do something like this. I hope people will take notice and understand the idea behind this campaign—that something as basic as physical activity and healthy eating habits can reduce your risk of cancer in later life." This will be Brosie's first attempt to climb Kilimanjaro. Sean Swarner, on the other hand, is a very experienced climber having climbed the tallest mountains on each continent including a trip to the top of Mount Everest with only partial use of his lungs. Sean was diagnosed with cancer twice, at the ages of 13 and 16, but was able to defeat the disease both times, much to the astonishment of his doctors.

"This is a great event for a really important cause. What Brosie and Sean are doing is impressive and hopefully people will take notice of not just their climb, but the reasons they are doing it," said David Hill, president of UICC. "It is important for people to understand the necessity and benefits of a healthy and active lifestyle for children. That's what this campaign is about, we need the people who have a say in a child's life, the parents, teachers and decision-makers, to help children make healthy choices that can lead to a cancer free future. Events like this are important because they remind people that this campaign isn't just about World Cancer Day, but that it is something that needs to be thought about all year."

The event can be followed online at www.worldcancercampaign.org/kiliclimb where you will find detailed information and Brosie's blog, which he is updating daily from the mountain.

About the World Cancer Campaign

"Today's children, tomorrow's world", is focused on children and cancer prevention. The campaign helps UICC members and partners to run education and mobilization projects and measure their effectiveness and aims to improve awareness in the fight against cancer, which in many countries still takes a back seat to other public health issues. "Today's children, tomorrow's world" targets parents, health professionals and decision-makers with four key messages:

- give children and young people a smoke-free environment;
encourage an energy-balanced lifestyle based on healthy diet and physical activity;
- learn about protection against cancer-causing infections; and
- teach children and teenagers to avoid UV exposure by being “sun smart”.

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