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Contact: Carly Chomer, Breast Cancer Fund • (703) 407-3433 • carly@breastcancerfund.org

Local Doctor Goes to Great Heights for Breast Cancer Prevention

Team of 28 Breast Cancer Survivors and Supporters Scale Mt. Shasta with the Breast Cancer Fund's Climb Against the Odds

MT. SHASTA, Calif. – On Wednesday, June 24, Steven Heird, M.D., of York, Pa., scaled Northern California's 14,162-foot Mt. Shasta with the Breast Cancer Fund's Climb Against the Odds expedition of breast cancer survivors and others affected by the disease. A vein specialist, Heird, 52, underwent months of rigorous physical and mental preparation for the climb. He climbed to honor his father, who is currently undergoing treatment for leukemia, and several close friends and an uncle who lost their lives to cancer, and to support the Breast Cancer Fund's work to eliminate the environmental causes of the disease.

The team began their ascent of Mt. Shasta on Tuesday afternoon, leaving from the trailhead for Hidden Valley base camp at 9,400 feet. The team departed base camp in rope teams of five to six people between 2 and 4 a.m. on Wednesday morning. By noon, 21 of the 28 climbers had reached the summit at 14,162 feet, and everyone had safely returned to base camp by 5 p.m. After a night of rest at base camp, they returned to the town of Mt. Shasta to celebrate with friends, family and the local community.

In addition to training and climbing, the team took part in extensive fundraising for prevention. This year's Climb Against the Odds raised over \$450,000 for the Breast Cancer Fund.

"Climb Against the Odds participants have gone to great heights—literally and figuratively—to honor their own and their loved ones' experiences with breast cancer, and to promote prevention," said Jeanne Rizzo, R.N., president of the Breast Cancer Fund. "We are truly honored to have such extraordinary and passionate women and men committed to taking one step at a time to stop this disease before it starts."

In the United States, a woman's lifetime risk of developing breast cancer is an alarming 1 in 8, and no more than 1 in 10 women with breast cancer has a genetic history of the disease. Scientific evidence points to toxic chemicals and radiation as factors for the high rates of the disease. Founded in 1992, the Breast Cancer Fund is the leading national organization working to identify and eliminate the environmental and other preventable causes.

Climb Against the Odds 2009 was the Breast Cancer Fund's 10th team of breast survivors and supporters to climb for prevention, and the sixth team to climb Mt. Shasta.

This climb will follow in the tradition of the Breast Cancer Fund's past expeditions: Mt. Aconcagua, Argentina (1995); Mt. McKinley, Alaska (1998); Mt. Fuji, Japan (2000), Mt. Rainier, Wash. (2005), and Mt. Shasta, Calif. (2003, 2004, 2006, 2007 and 2008).

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The Breast Cancer Fund is the leading national organization working to identify and eliminate the environmental causes of breast cancer. www.breastcancerfund.org