



NEWS RELEASE

Monday, February 28, 2011

1,550 firefighters from US, Canada, New Zealand to climb Columbia Center Sunday, March 6

Montana firefighter vying for 3rd consecutive world firefighter stairclimbing title

SEATTLE – Two-time Scott Firefighter Stairclimb champion Kory Burgess of Montana will join 1,550 firefighters from 27 US states, Canada and New Zealand on the stairs of Seattle's Columbia Center, Sunday, March 6 as he musters for an attempted third consecutive world firefighter stairclimbing title.

The 20th annual climb to the 73rd floor observation deck of Seattle's tallest building benefits The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. Climbing gets underway at 9 a.m. and continues until 4 p.m.

For the 29-year-old Missoula firefighter, beating his winning 2010 time of 11 minutes, 1.35-seconds up the 69 flights of Columbia Center steps or even flirting with his record time the previous year pales in comparison to the spirit of helping those battling blood cancer.

"After last year, I didn't think I would do this event again, because athletically I had accomplished all that I had wanted to accomplish. But there is a real positive energy around this climb," said Burgess who will be make the climb for the seventh time and will be joined with 20 firefighters from two Missoula fire departments. "It's torturous. But the 11 minutes of pain is a small sacrifice compared to being able to help LLS help patients and families working through blood cancer."

Along with Burgess, 43-year-old Georgia Sanz Daniels of Graham Fire and Rescue near Tacoma will be vying for her 12th overall women's title. Her 2010 winning time was 14 minutes, 51.9 seconds.

In total, firefighters aged 18 - 69 from a record 281 different fire departments will strap on fire fighting bunker gear and breathing apparatus weighing about 50 lbs. and sprint-climb 788 feet in vertical elevation (1,311 stairs / 69 stories) from the Fifth Avenue lobby to the 73rd floor observation deck of the 76-story skyscraper.

At 943 feet, about one-and-a-half times the height of Seattle's Space Needle, the Columbia Center is the tallest building (by stories) on the West Coast and the 57th tallest building in the world.

The 2011 climb honors four-year-old Hunter Smith of Port Orchard, Wash. and 16-year-old Breonia Adam of Stayton, Oregon who both are successfully undergoing treatment for acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL), a fast-growing cancer of the white blood cells and the most common form of leukemia among adolescents.

Hunter's father, Rob, is among 10 Bremerton firefighters taking part in the climb, while Breonia's step-father, Brennan Baker along with Derek Gilbert and Scott Vigil, all of the Stayton Fire District just southeast of Salem, will make the Columbia Center climb.

Leukemia, lymphoma, myeloma and myelodysplastic syndromes (MDS) are types of cancer that can affect the bone marrow, the blood cells, the lymph nodes and other parts of the lymphatic system. These cancers are all related since each are likely a result from acquired changes to the DNA of a single stem cell.

An estimated 912,938 Americans are living with leukemia, Hodgkin and non-Hodgkin lymphoma, myeloma and myelodysplastic syndromes. According to the National Cancer Institute, an estimated combined total of 137,260 people in the United States will be diagnosed with leukemia, lymphoma or myeloma in 2011 with one person in the US being diagnosed with a blood cancer approximately every four minutes. New cases of leukemia, lymphoma and myeloma will account for 9 percent of the 1,529,560 new cancer cases diagnosed in the US this year alone.

How to Help: Although the event is open only to firefighters the public can contribute to a local firefighter or firehouse participating in the Scott Firefighter Stairclimb. To contribute, please visit www.FirefighterStairclimb.org.

On Sunday, March 20, the public can tackle the same Columbia Center steps at the 25th annual Big Climb, which also benefits LLS. To register for the Big Climb, visit www.BigClimb.org.

The Scott Firefighter Stairclimb is sponsored by Scott Health & Safety, CAC Real Estate Management Co. Inc., McCormick's Fishhouse and Bar, Lion Apparel, Firehouse.com, Fairmont Olympic Hotel, Alaska Airlines, Talking Rain, Columbia Tower Club, True North, Dragon Fur, Service Master Clean, fado Irish Pub & Restaurant.

About The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS) is the world's largest voluntary health agency dedicated to blood cancer. The LLS mission: Cure leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease and myeloma, and improve the quality of life of patients and their families. LLS funds lifesaving blood cancer research around the world and provides free information and support services.

About the Washington/Alaska Chapter

The Washington/Alaska Chapter (www.lls.org/wa) is one of 60 local chapters across the U.S., with an additional 11 chapters in Canada. Located in Seattle since 1984, the Washington/Alaska Chapter is close to the treatment facilities where patients and families come for lifesaving therapies. Major annual fundraising campaigns include Team In Training[®], Light The Night[®] Walk, School & Youth ProgramsSM, the Scott Firefighter Stairclimb, Big Climb, Winter Pineapple Classic and The Leukemia Cup Regatta.

www.FirefighterStairclimb.org

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