



Peter Munk Cardiac Centre

Toronto General Hospital

The Expedition: How a Heart Doc Aims to Take Awareness to New Heights

The Mission

Dr. Heather Ross, Medical Director of the Cardiac Transplant Program at the Peter Munk Cardiac Centre at Toronto General Hospital (TGH) is on a mission, a mission to raise awareness about the devastating effects of heart disease, to save as many lives as possible by fundraising for life-saving heart disease research and encouraging people to be organ donors, and to show transplant recipients that they too can live a full and active life after a transplant.

By December 2006 Dr. Ross hopes to raise \$1 million for cardiac disease research and to top off her fundraising climb, Dr. Ross and a small team of dedicated individuals, including a heart transplant recipient will climb Mt. Vinson Massif in Antarctica. The team will be leaving for Antarctica at the end of November, arrive on the continent on December 3, climb Mt. Vinson for 17 days and leave the continent on December 21 (weather permitting).

The Team

- Dr. Heather Ross Medical Director of the Cardiac Transplant Program, Peter Munk Cardiac Centre, TGH
- Dr. Patricia Murphy, Clinical Director, Cardiac Anesthesia, Peter Munk Cardiac Centre, TGH
- Ian Delaney, Executive Chairman, Sherritt International Corporation
- Dale Shippam, Firefighter who underwent a heart transplant in February 1999
- Barry Blanchard, guide from Yamnuska Guiding
- Dave Stark, guide from Yamnuska Guiding

The Mountain

Mt. Vinson Massif is the highest peak in the Antarctica (16,050 ft and 8 miles wide) and was first discovered by a US Navy aircraft in 1957. Nicholas Clinch and a party of eight were the first to ascent the mountain in 1966 and since then it has become a popular climb. The climb is best accomplished by snow/ice climbing. (Source: wikipedia.com) November to January on Mt. Vinson is the summer season with 24 hours of sunlight, and an average temperature of -20°F .

(Source: <http://classic.mountainzone.com/climbing/antarctica/>)

Risks associated with the climb include extreme weather conditions that can have adverse effects on the human body; exposure to solar radiation, which can pose a risk to eyes and skin; extreme low temperatures; unstable slopes and crevasses; and the effect of oxygen depletion along with any medications can cause adverse events. (Source: www.adventure-network.com)

The Training

Each member of the climbing team must undergo physical tests to ensure that they are physically healthy enough to participate in the climb. Tests include stress tests, angiograms and cardiac fitness testing.

Each member must work out up to 25 hours a week leading up to the trip and attend practice climbs. This past March the team embarked on a practice climb to Mt. Athabasca in the Columbian Ice fields to practice ice climbing, walking on crampons (a framework of spikes that are attached to boots to provide traction on snow and ice), crevasse rescues and learn safety procedures.

For more information, please visit www.testyourlimits-antarctica.ca

Media Contacts:

Alexandra Radkewycz

Sr. Public Affairs Advisor, Toronto General Hospital

(P) 416.340.3895

(Pager) 416.719.4578

(E-mail) Alexandra.radkewycz@uhn.on.ca

Janine Ojah-Maharaj

Public Affairs Associate, University Health Network

(P) 416.340.4800 ext. 6430

(E-mail) Janine.ojah-maharaj@uhn.on.ca

Maria Da Silva

Public Affairs Associate, Toronto General and Western Hospital Foundation

(P) 416.340.4294

(E-mail) maria.dasilva@uhn.on.ca

Live Life. Test Your Limits. Climb a Mountain.

