

NEWS RELEASE

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2007 Big Climb for Leukemia

Seven Summits veterans Phil and Susan Ershler to lead 3,200 climbers up Seattle's Columbia Center

*Climbers ages 8 to 82 to climb tallest building west of Mississippi for Leukemia &
Lymphoma Society*

Ershler's new book TOGETHER ON TOP OF THE WORLD available for signing at climb

SEATTLE, Feb. 15, 2007 – Kirkland's Phil and Susan Ershler, who battled life-threatening illness on the way to becoming the first couple in history to successfully climb the famed Seven Summits – summiting the highest mountain on all seven continents - will lead over 3,200 climbers ages 8 to 82 up the steps of Seattle's Columbia Center, Sunday, March 18 at the 21st annual Big Climb for Leukemia.

The annual climb to the top of the tallest building (by stories) west of the Mississippi raised \$465,000 in 2006 to fight blood cancers. Along with the Scott Firefighter Stairclimb, March 4, the Big Climb for Leukemia is one of two Seattle climbs benefiting the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society this March.

Beginning at 8:30 a.m., climbers will sprint-climb 788 feet in vertical elevation (1,311 stairs / 69 stories) from the Fifth Ave. lobby level to the 73rd floor observation deck of the Columbia Center. At 943 feet tall, the Columbia Center is about one and a half times the height of the Space Needle.

Like many competitive fun runs, both competitive and "fun" categories are available to accommodate all ages and abilities with individual climbers and teams vying for best time in six age categories and most funds raised. The public can register for the Big Climb for Leukemia or make a donation to fight blood cancers at www.BigClimb.org.

"Sometimes things are destined to be," said Phil Ershler who along with his wife Susan will co-chair the Big Climb. "I've been treated for two different cancers – one just prior to heading for Everest in 2002, which delayed the quest, and the other just after the climb," said Ershler, who has also seen his Ecuadorian goddaughter and a Whitman College classmate both survive their Leukemia diagnosis as well as losing his friend and Mt. McKinley climbing partner, the famous Iditerod winner, Susan Butcher, to the disease this last year.

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Our mission: *cure leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease and myeloma and improve the quality of life of patients and their families*

"Surviving cancer means a second chance at life," said Ershler. "This is possible, in part, because of research funded by events like the Big Climb for Leukemia. "Sue and I are honored to play even a small roll in the ongoing efforts of the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society."

In 2006, Zach Schade, a Seattle firefighter from Tumwater, Wash. won the Big Climb for Leukemia for the second consecutive year. "The competition keeps me motivated to stay in shape and the fundraising for blood cancer research and treatment is important," said Schade, 38, who scaled the 69 flights of stairs in seven minutes, 51 seconds, edging Seattle attorney Henry Wigglesworth by 15 seconds. "For just the sheer time, this is the hardest race I've ever done. From the 40th floor on up it's pure survival."

At 81-years-old, George Murray of Kent, Wash. and Anders Jacobsen of Everett, Wash., were the "most experienced" climbers at the 2006 climb. Murray clocked a 16:48 for 941st place overall, while Jacobsen arrived at the top in 21:18 for 1,239th overall. The two octogenarians, who are expected to compete again in 2007, were among 23 men and five women over 60 years old to compete in last year's climb.

More than 747,000 Americans have leukemia, myeloma or lymphoma, the most common form of blood cancer. Among children under 20, leukemia causes more deaths than any other cancer. In 2006, an estimated 2,640 Washingtonians were diagnosed with blood cancer and an estimated 1,150 lost their battle with the disease.

For more information on the 21st annual Big Climb for Leukemia, please visit www.bigclimb.org

About TOGETHER ON TOP OF THE WORLD

When Phil and Susan Ershler reached the top of Mt. Everest, they became the first couple in history to scale the fabled Seven Summits. TOGETHER ON TOP OF THE WORLD (Warner Books) is the story of their journey—through life-threatening illnesses—to the highest mountain on every continent, to the extremes of elation and despair. It is a love story, an adventure story, a story of success against all odds. Above all, it is the story of two people who refused to back down in quest of a seemingly impossible dream. TOGETHER ON TOP OF THE WORLD by Phil & Susan Ershler with Robin Simons will be available at the Big Climb for Leukemia and in book stores April 2. A portion of the proceeds from copies of TOGETHER ON TOP OF THE WORLD sold at the Big Climb for Leukemia will benefit the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.

About the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society®, (www.lls.org) headquartered in White Plains, NY, is the world's largest voluntary health organization dedicated to funding blood cancer research and providing education and patient services. Since its founding in 1949, the Society has invested more than \$424 million in research specifically targeting leukemia, lymphoma and myeloma.

The Washington/Alaska Chapter (www.lls.org/wa) is one of 66 local chapters across the US, with additional branches 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 Programs, the Scott Firefighter Stairclimb, the Big Climb for Leukemia and The Leukemia Cup Regatta.

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