



For Immediate Release

Contact:

Maureen Waslicki

(262) 369-4421

maureen.waslicki@nmss.org

wisMS.org

MT. KILIMANJARO “LEAP OF FAITH” CLIMBERS JOINING A TOP BIKE MS: BEST DAM BIKE RIDE CYCLING TEAM

(HARTLAND, WIS.) – This year, [Team CCC](#) is taking its awareness and fundraising efforts for multiple sclerosis to new “heights,” thanks to the addition of the Leap of Faith team: members of a special group of individuals diagnosed with MS or Parkinson’s Disease and their companions who traveled to Africa in 2011 to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro. They will be traveling from throughout Wisconsin and across the country to take part in the [Bike MS: TOYOTA Best Dam Bike Ride](#) on August 3-4.

The Leap of Faith team was led by Wisconsin’s own Lori Schneider, a Janesville native and the first person with MS to summit Mt. Everest and complete the Seven Summits (Mt. Kilimanjaro, Mt. Elbrus, Mt. McKinley (Denali), Aconcagua, Vinson Massif, Mt. Kosciuszko and Mt. Everest). She will be volunteering throughout both days of the Best Dam Bike Ride.

Other Leap of Faith members who will be riding include multiple sclerosis team mates Susie Weber (from Jackson, Wis.), Kristy Banaszak (from Jackson, Wis.) and Gina Anderson (from Michigan); Parkinson’s team mate John Carlin (from Colorado); and Kilimanjaro companion climbers Paula Sanchez (California) and Tina Liebetrau (from Janesville, Wis.). Weber’s husband and daughter, Banaszak’s husband, and Carlin’s friend Phil Martin will ride also.

“Leap of Faith” refers to the name of their Mt. Kilimanjaro expedition as well as a book about the climb called “[More Than A Mountain—Our Leap of Faith](#).” Containing chapters written by the climbers, it has sold more than 6,000 copies to date with proceeds supporting the National MS Society, Pedaling for Parkinson’s and the Wilkins Parkinson’s Foundation. That includes more than \$10,000 donated to Team CCC in support of the National MS Society.

-more-

LEAP OF FAITH

PAGE 2

“They are a humble group of people with huge hearts. They are athletes and advocates with amazing spirits, and have become my extended family. I am so darn proud to know them all,” Schneider said. “All of the riders and volunteers from our Leap of Faith team are very fortunate because we still have our mobility. We are participating in the Best Dam Bike Ride to be a voice for those who can no longer ride, who can no longer walk, who can no longer do some of the things they once enjoyed. We’re all honored to be involved and want to do our part in helping the National MS Society continue to raise awareness and funds for vital research to find a cure for multiple sclerosis.”

“I’m so excited that this group of amazing, inspiring people are riding on Team CCC! They are a true testament to the power of the human spirit and give us evidence that we can accomplish seemingly insurmountable goals,” said Team CCC captain and Janesville resident Curt Sauser. “Though multiple sclerosis (and Parkinson’s Disease) are significant hurdles in life, their accomplishments prove that we cannot let health issues define who we are, or ‘spill’ our bucket list.

“I am humbled that these folks are wearing polka dots (Team CCC’s signature bike jersey design) and riding alongside me for the 30th anniversary of the Best Dam Bike Ride!” added Sauser.

This will be Team CCC’s fifth year with the Best Dam Bike Ride. It has grown from 10 members in 2009 to more than 100 members this year, including the Leap of Faith riders. Last year the team raised more than \$50,000, which is their goal this year too.

About the Best Dam Bike Ride

The 30th annual Bike MS: TOYOTA Best Dam Bike Ride will bring together nearly 1,700 registered riders and volunteers for a two-day event that begins at Waukesha County Technical College in Pewaukee on Saturday, August 3 at 7:30 a.m., continues with an evening celebration at UW-Whitewater, and finishes on Sunday at WPS in Madison as riders cross the finish line throughout the afternoon. Riders choose from 50-, 75- or 100-mile route options each day and receive full support throughout the weekend with rest stops every 8-12 miles, support vehicles along the route, medical and mechanical staff, lodging, food and entertainment. There is a \$40 non-refundable registration fee and riders are asked to pledge or raise a minimum of \$300; first-time participants are able to waive the registration fee.

Donations will be accepted to help the Ride meet its \$1.5 million goal. The money is used to fund MS research as well as programs and services for the more than 10,000 children, women and men in Wisconsin diagnosed with MS – a prevalence rate that’s believed to be one of the highest in the nation.

When the Best Dam Bike Ride began in 1984, there were no FDA-approved therapies for MS. Today there are 10, including two new oral treatments approved since last year’s event. All were made possible in part by the more than \$23 million ride participants have raised over its 30-year history.

-more-

LEAP OF FAITH

PAGE 3

For more information about MS, visit www.wisMS.org. To register for the ride or donate, visit www.bestdambikeride.org.

TOYOTA is this year's presenting sponsor. Other sponsors include WPS Insurance, Columbia St. Mary's, UW Health, American Family Insurance, First Bank Business, Madison Gas & Electric and MillerCoors.

About Multiple Sclerosis

Multiple sclerosis, an unpredictable, often disabling disease of the central nervous system, interrupts the flow of information within the brain, and between the brain and body. Symptoms range from numbness and tingling to blindness and paralysis. The progress, severity and specific symptoms of MS in any one person cannot yet be predicted, but advances in research and treatment are moving us closer to a world free of MS. Most people with MS are diagnosed between the ages of 20 and 50, with at least two to three times more women than men being diagnosed with the disease. MS affects more than 2.1 million people worldwide. More than 10,000 children, women and men have been diagnosed in Wisconsin, believed to be one of the higher prevalence rates in the nation.

About the National Multiple Sclerosis Society

The National MS Society addresses the challenges of each person affected by MS. To fulfill this mission, the Society funds cutting-edge research, drives change through advocacy, facilitates professional education, collaborates with MS organizations around the world, and provides programs and services designed to help people with MS and their families move forward with their lives. In 2012 alone, the Society invested \$43 million to support 350 research projects around the world while providing programs and services that assisted more than one million people. The Society is dedicated to achieving a world free of MS. Join the movement at www.wisMS.org or by calling 262-369-4400 or 800-242-3358.

Early and ongoing treatment with an FDA-approved therapy can make a difference for people with multiple sclerosis. Learn about your options by talking to your health care professional and contacting the National MS Society at nationalMSSociety.org or 1-800-344-4867 (1-800-FIGHT-MS).

###