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Columbus resident climbs mountains for charity

BY RYAN SCHROER
For The Republic

Columbus resident Wally Glover recently returned from climbing Mount Aconcagua in Argentina. Although he did not reach the summit of the 22,831-foot mountain, Glover climbed 21,060 feet — nearly four miles.

"That was 2,000 feet higher than I've ever climbed before," Glover said. "Although I would have loved to have reached the summit, I have no regrets."

Glover said he was about two hours away from the summit when he became exhausted and felt depleted.

"I'd given it everything I had," he said. "Prudence dictated that I let go because I didn't want to be a danger to myself or my teammates."

Glover, 64, was climbing Mount Aconcagua to raise money for youth obesity. As a hospital chaplain for St. Vincent Salem and St. Vincent Dunn hospitals, Glover helped the St. Vincent foundation set up the L.I.F.E (Lifetime Individual Fitness and Eating) For Kids program.

Glover hired Jackie Kramer, a clinical dietitian who is certified in weight management, to help oversee the program. Kramer helps her young patients and their families comprehend obesity. There is no minimum age for the program.

"I see 4-year-olds who are on blood pressure medication," Kramer said. "They have hypertension and adult onset diabetes. They had to rename the classification of diabetes to Type 1 and Type 2 because of (youth obesity)."

The purpose of the year-long program is to provide youths with motivation and techniques to live healthier lifestyles.

"We have about 30 kids enrolled in the program," Kramer said. "We have seen a lot of families change their activity levels or change the way they eat. The success lies in the parents' hands. We take a multidisciplinary approach because it's about being more aware. We have dietitians, physical

therapists and psychologists who work with the families."

Glover is also an integral part of the program's success. He has climbed five of the seven summits. During his last four expeditions, he has climbed almost 80,000 feet and raised about \$80,000 for L.I.F.E. for Kids. Kramer makes sure she makes kids aware of who Glover is and what he is doing for the program.

"Sometimes, the attention I get for climbing mountains can be a little embarrassing," Glover said. "I don't do it

for the attention. I hope the kids think that if this gray-haired guy can climb mountains, then they can watch their food portions and get more exercise."

Glover has gotten plenty of exercise climbing five of the seven summits. He also has had lots of time to reflect.

"This has all been a dream for me," he said. "When I climbed to Everest Base camp, it was my first experience climbing a mountain. That experience incubated other dreams. When you learn how to learn, you keep on learning and when you learn how to dream, you keep on dreaming."

On Mount Aconcagua, Glover learned how unforgiving the weather can be to persistent climbers.

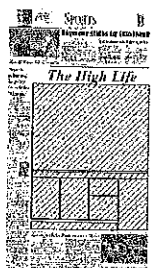
"I know what it's like when the wind blows at 60 miles per hour for 36 hours, almost continuously," he said. "At 60 miles per hour, the wind makes your body bend, but at 70 miles per hour, it blows you off your feet. It was 25 degrees below zero on summit day, January 20."

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Glover is thankful that he escaped the mountain basically unharmed, suffering only some frostbitten fingers.

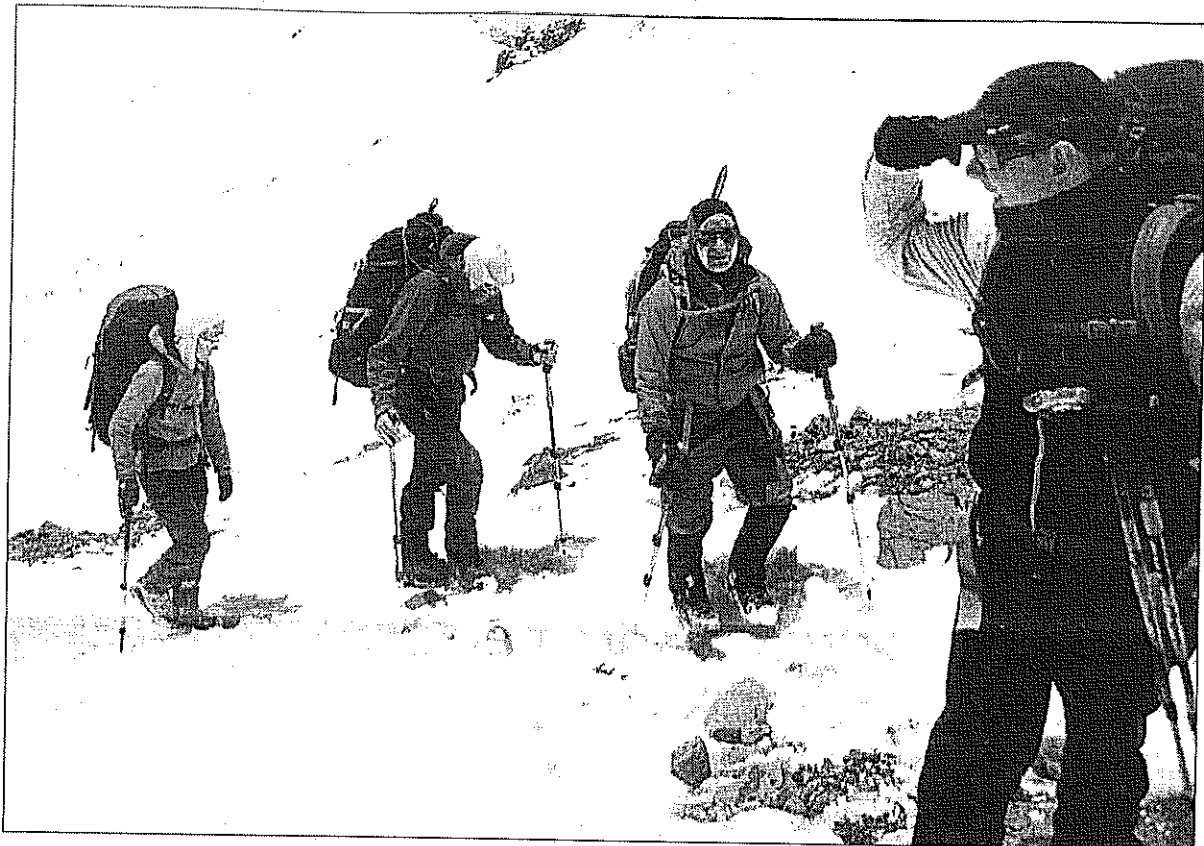
"I'm thankful that I have all my fingers and toes," Glover said. "There will be other mountains, but I don't want to speculate about that yet. When I do these kinds of things, I always reset my goals."

It's possible that Glover could scale Mount Rainier



in Washington next, but he's still focusing on mentally unpacking from his Argentina

experience. When asked about his future expeditions, Glover responded with a wide smile.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Wally Glover, second from right, reaches 18,300 feet at Mount Aconcagua in Argentina. Glover reached 21,060 feet — nearly four miles — with a group raising money to fight childhood obesity.

“I know what it’s like when the wind blows at 60 mph and you’re 21,000 feet up.”