



The Sunflower Fund
Hope begins with you

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LEUKAEMIA SURVIVOR ATTEMPTS TO SUMMIT MOUNT ACONCAGUA TEN YEARS POST TRANSPLANT IN SUPPORT OF THE SUNFLOWER FUND

[10 January 2018] On Sunday 14 January 2018, Johannesburg based Leukaemia survivor – Ray Funnell will set off on an epic journey to the Andes Mountains in an attempt to summit Aconcagua, the highest mountain in South America.

The extreme altitude of 6,962m (22,840ft) means the ascent will be gradual and will take about 2 weeks, but if all goes well, the team will summit on Ray's birthday – 29 January.

Now 10 years post-transplant, Ray was diagnosed with Acute Myloid Leukaemia (AML) in 2006 after noticing a bruise on his arm wasn't healing. Due to his prognosis, the best solution was to look for a stem cell donor. Fortunately for Ray, his only sibling was a perfect match and he received a stem cell transplant in the beginning of 2007.

The journey since then has been very eventful, with a relapse, chemo sessions, blood transfusions and isolation wards inbetween. However, fuelled with a new lease on life, Ray lives by the motto: Never lose your dream.

He has since summited Mt. Kilimanjaro, Mt Elbrus in Russia and Mt Vinson in Antarctica with his son Jayson. This will be his second attempt at summiting Aconcagua, which his son managed to bravely complete on their last attempt.

"The symbolic gesture of taking The Sunflower Fund banner to the summit is my way of saying THANK YOU to all blood stem cell donors," says Ray. "I hope that the publicity from this climb will encourage family, friends and everyone living in South Africa to help save lives by committing to becoming blood stem cell donors." Ray continued.

Ray has set himself the target of raising R22 840.00 for The Sunflower Fund - R100 for every 100ft climbed. The Sunflower Fund recruits potential blood stem cell donors and raises funds to pay the R2500.00 tissue-typing test cost per donor required in the recruitment process.

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PO Box 31163 Tokai 7966 Cape Town, South Africa
Office 106B Richmond Centre, 174-206 Main Road, Plumstead, 7800
Telephone: 021 701 0661 • Fax: 021 701 6790 • e-mail: info@sunflowerfund.org.za

Regional offices: Johannesburg and Durban

Directors: J Sedgwick (Chairman), Dr M. du Toit, B. Jessop, Dr L. Mpuntsha, Y. Naidoo, Prof. R Ramesar, D. Walker **CEO:** Alana James

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To support Ray in his mission, visit his cause page on [Given Gain](#) to make a donation.

For more information about The Sunflower Fund or to register as a stem cell donor call 0800 121082 or visit www.sunflowerfund.org.za.

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