

Preparing to climb Kilimanjaro for local kids

by **Nathan Howes**
Special to the Beaver

Three Oakville residents will climb Mount Kilimanjaro next month to help local children get involved in sports and recreational activities.

From Jan. 11-25, Kurt Robertson, Lucrezia Motta and Todd McDaniel will be among 15 others climbing Africa's Kilimanjaro to support Canadian Tire Jumpstart — a charitable organization providing financially-disadvantaged youths an opportunity to participate in organized sports and recreation.

Jumpstart covers the costs associated with registration, equipment and/or transportation.

With the overall fundraising goal set at \$300,000, Team Oakville is looking to fetch at least \$20,000. Money collected by the trio will support Oakville families through the local Jumpstart chapter. As of early last month, they had almost reached their goal.

"For people interested in doing something like this, there is a personal investment in it. It's about putting yourself through some hardship to raise funds for a charity," said McDaniel. "I'm hoping to inspire my kids and the people I know to get off the couch,

unplug from the electronics and go outside to do something active."

McDaniel said the hike "brings together" five things he enjoys — challenges, doing good for others, exploring the world, outdoor activities and the camaraderie of a group.

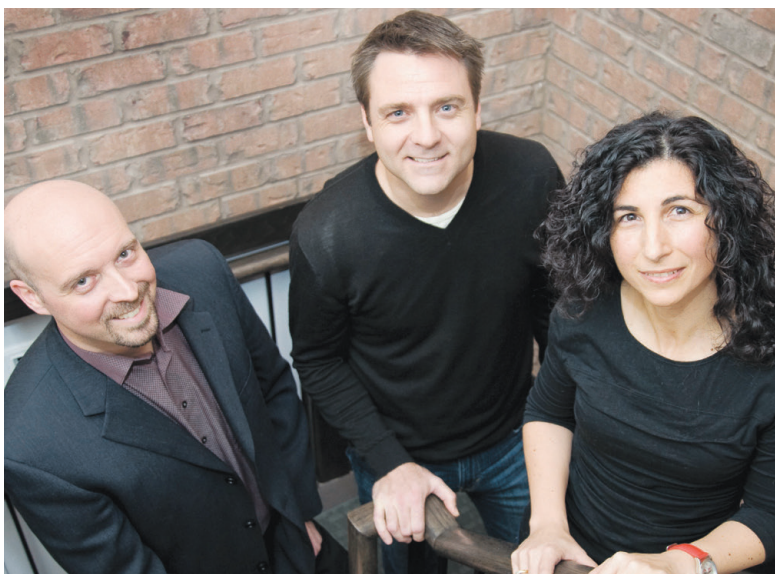
"You go through that journey together as a group and you form these great friendships. You end up spending a lot of time with people going through a common experience," said McDaniel.

This won't be the first climb for Robertson and McDaniel, who trekked to Mount Everest's base camp for Jumpstart in 2011. The pair raised approximately \$23,000.

"It was the most rewarding experience of my life. It's one of the reasons why I'm doing this," admitted Robertson.

McDaniel noted the local Jumpstart group supported 262 children in 2011 with nearly \$35,000. In 2012, it contributed more than \$35,000 to assist 259 Oakville children.

"We were able to direct these funds back into the Oakville community through the local Jumpstart chapter. This gave Oakville kids financial access to activities such as soccer, skating, hockey, gymnastics and basket-



Climbing Mount Kilimanjaro to raise funds for JumpStart are, from left, Todd McDaniel, Kurt Robertson and Lucrezia Motta. | photo by Riziero Vertolli - Oakville Beaver (Follow on Twitter @halton_photog or facebook.com/HaltonPhotog)

ball," said McDaniel.

To prepare for the climb, the trio has been on an exercise regiment. Robertson has been running 20-25 kilometres a week for four months. Motta has been walking, hiking and cross-fit training and McDaniel has been running at the gym four or five times a week since April.

"Kurt and I went out separately for

a hike in Kelso (Conservation Area) just to get used to the hills with a backpack. Another participant and I camped over to get used to sleeping in the cold," said McDaniel.

The challenges facing them on the mountain will include cold temperatures, shortness of breath, increased heart rate, weight loss, dehydration and "burning three times the amount

of calories than you do at sea level," Robertson explained.

"All these things are signs we actually watch each other for. The most important thing is hydration. (You need) to drink four, five or six litres of water per day just to keep hydrated," said Robertson. "As you get higher, the more you breathe, the more you exhale the humidity, which is just water leaving (your body)."

Robertson noted people often underestimate how much training is needed for an expedition of this size.

"You don't have to be in the best of shape, but you have to be in decent shape," said Robertson, noting that as you climb higher, your lungs are being pushed to get as much oxygen as you can. "Unless you do exercise and cardio, you're going to have a difficult time going to each level."

It also requires a significant investment of time and money, Motta said.

"I have thought about climbing Kilimanjaro before, but I have to say the thought of doing it (while) raising money for Jumpstart really pushed me over the edge to go do it," said Motta.

To make a donation to Team Oakville, visit www.ctjumpstart.ca/teamoakville.

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