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Two-Time Teen Cancer Survivor Successfully Reaches South Pole to Celebrate Huge 25th Anniversary
Sean Swarner the Face of New Grape-Nuts “What’s Your Mountain” Campaign, to Debut in February

Two-time teen cancer survivor Sean Swarner embarked on the journey of a lifetime this month when he ventured to the southern-most point on the surface of the Earth. Swarner departed the U.S. just before New Year’s Eve and arrived almost two weeks later on Monday, Jan. 12. The South Pole features harsh conditions with high winds and bitter temperatures -- as low as -70 degrees while he was there – and Swarner trudged the final 60 miles on skis.

Swarner is no newcomer to amazing feats. The only cancer patient known to have been diagnosed both with Hodgkin’s lymphoma *and* Askin’s sarcoma, he was the first cancer patient to summit Mt. Everest – the world’s tallest peak - and to have conquered the Seven Summits, representing the highest peaks on each continent. Now, he’s set his sights on a trek to the North Pole, proving the point that- with proper planning - we can all do incredible things despite the “obstacles” in our paths.

2015 is a huge milestone year for Swarner in that it also marks the 25th anniversary of his battle with cancer. Diagnosed at 13 years old with Stage IV Hodgkin’s lymphoma and at 16 with Askin’s sarcoma, Sean twice was given just months or weeks to live. Twice, he not only survived – but thrived. In addition to his historic climbs, he’s completed the Hawaii Ironman Triathlon, founded a nonprofit, written a book and continues to constantly set new goals and break new records.

“I kept going,” says Swarner, “and I’m never going to stop.” The 40-year-old super achiever doesn’t let the prospect of death, disability or disappointments derail his dreams or his motivation. In fact, it only spurs him on. He’s achieved each of his summits and the incredible Ironman challenge with just one lung and he’s a highly rated motivational speaker who’s been dubbed one of the 8 most inspirational persons of all time.

The trek to the South Pole was sponsored by Grape-Nuts , VolitionRx (a life sciences company focused on developing diagnostic tests for cancer and other conditions), Marmot and LEKI. While at the Pole, Swarner will become the face of the newest Grape-Nuts campaign video to debut in February. While in Antarctica, Swarner tweeted and texted enthusiastic fans and supporters as best he could and, now back, is connecting with hospitals and classrooms across the country to celebrate the momentous occasion and deliver a heartfelt message of hope, optimism and a can-do attitude. The footage filmed in Antarctica will be used across Grape-Nuts’ social channels and in contest promotions.

“It’s an honor to join the Post Grape-Nuts team on their journey to Antarctica,” says Swarner. “I’m a firm believer in the inspiration at the core of the Grape-Nuts “*What’s Your Mountain*” campaign and I hope our journey inspires others to conquer their mountains and meet their goals. In addition to Post, I’m especially grateful to the additional sponsors who have teamed up to support my challenge of trekking the South Pole. Together with VolitionRx, we’ve committed to raising awareness of cancer and beating the disease, which is best accomplished by early detection through screening.”

MORE

Interesting South Pole Trivia:

- Due to continental drift, the South Pole moves some 3+ feet annually and its official location is marked every Jan. 1 with the moving of official South Pole signs and markers.
- The geographic South Pole is the site of a U.S. research station established in 1956, and aside from scientists, there are few visitors to what is one of the most inhospitable spots on Earth – usually just a few dozen annually.
- A ceremonial South Pole is set aside for photo ops and Swanner hopes to add his image to a collection that features few but has intrigued many.
- Though explorers first sighted Antarctica in 1820, it would be almost a century later that Norwegian Roald Amundsen reached the South Pole itself on Dec. 14, 1911. A competing party arrived 34 days later with all five subsequently succumbing to lack of food and brutal cold. Many who've attempted the trek to the southern-most reaches have failed – and perished.
- Grape-Nuts has an interesting history with several historic treks in the most hostile regions of the world. In 1913, explorer Donald B. MacMillan and crew carried cases of the cereal with them as they explored the northern Arctic region. More than 80 years ago, Post Grape-Nuts sponsored Sir Admiral Byrd's expedition to Antarctica, where the first long range two-way radio transmission occurred. Maps of the expedition route appeared then on Grape-Nuts boxes. And more than 60 years ago, Sir Edmund Hillary and Sherpa guide Tenzing Norgay used handfuls of the cereal to fuel their historic summit to Mt. Everest.

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