

Seven Summits Project

John Collinson



Home at Snowbird: Age 16



Bouldering in Little Cottonwood: Age 16



Skiing Redstack Peak: Age 16

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My name is John Collinson. I am sixteen years old and have grown up living at Snowbird Ski Resort in the Wasatch Mountains. At the age of four, I was the youngest person to climb Mount Rainier. My current goal is to be the youngest person to climb the "Seven Summits"; the highest peaks on each continent. Reaching this goal will take financial support from sponsors, family, and friends. To have the experiences brought by traveling the world climbing mountains is priceless to me.

My life has been spent in the mountains, winter and summer. My dad has worked for twenty-eight years on the Snowbird Ski Patrol and is currently an assistant director of Snow Safety. I was on skis at two and a half, and at the age of four, my parents packed my five year old sister Angel and me into an old Ford van for the summer, climbing and mountaineering. This was our lifestyle for the next ten years. I have climbed two hundred different large western mountains many of which I hold the age record on. During the winter, my mom taught a one room school at Alta which included my sister and me from 1995-2006. She still tutors my winter independent study program. In the spring and fall I attend public school in Salt Lake, maintaining a 3.9 G.P.A.

To me, summiting Everest is something I have only dreamt of. Climbing to the top of the seven summits seems like it would be the greatest physical feat I could accomplish. Dick Bass, the owner of Snowbird, was the first person to climb all seven summits. I grew up hanging out on Snowbird's Hidden Peak where the ski patrol is my family. Five of my ski patrol "uncles" have summited Everest as well as many of the world's other highest peaks. It has been inspiring to see their pictures and hear their stories. Dean Cardinale, my dad's partner, also has the goal of climbing the seven summits. When Dean climbed Mount Everest he brought me a rock from the summit which I now wear around my neck. I never take it off and it constantly reminds me of my desire to reach the top peaks of the world.

Willie Benegas, another Snowbird Ski Patroller, and his twin brother Damian, are two of the most accomplished climbers and guides in the world. Willie has summited Mount Everest eight times and has guided 12 clients to the top. I had the opportunity to climb and run with Willie this summer where he saw my talent in the mountains. He believes I have the aptitude both mentally and physically to climb the seven summits and has strengthened my belief in the reality of my goal to set the age record. My plans to start the quest are to go to Aconcagua in December and Everest in March with Willie and Damian Benegas.

People wonder why I set such a goal for myself because reaching it will include a lot of suffering in the cold away from family, friends, skiing, and all the comforts of home. Like anyone my age, it's easy for me to become lost in the world of electronic distractions; chatting on the computer, texting messages, talking about life instead of living it. My whole life I've been different; I want to live life instead of watching it on TV. It's so cool to connect with nature. As George Mallory once said: "The first question which you will ask and which I must try to answer is this, "What is the use of climbing Mount Everest?" and my answer must at once be, "It is no use." There is not the slightest prospect of any gain whatsoever. We shall not bring back a single bit of gold or silver, not a gem, not a bit of coal or iron. We shall not find a foot of earth that can be planted with crops to raise food. It's no use. So, if you cannot understand that there is something in man which responds to the challenge of this mountain and goes out to meet it, that the struggle is the struggle of life itself upward and forever upward, then you won't see why we go. What we get from this adventure is just sheer joy. And joy is, after all, the end of life. We do not live to eat and make money. We eat and make money to be able to enjoy life. That is what life means, and what life is for."

Thank you

Aconcagua (22,841ft/6,962m) South America

Trip Dates: December 23 - January 23, 2008/2009

Land Cost: \$4,250



We summited on the 14th! The second highest of the seven summits, Aconcagua confirmed my capacity to perform at high altitudes; we were feeling well and moving fast up high. This was a great conditioning trip to prepare me for Mt. Everest.

Mt. Everest (29,030ft/8850m) Asia

Expedition Dates: March 24 - May 31, 2009

Expedition Cost: \$65,000



Mt. Everest, at the top of the world, will be my longest, hardest, and most expensive trip. If I can climb the tallest peak in the world, I can physically conquer the rest of the seven summits.

Denali (20,320ft/6,195m) North America

Trip Dates: June 13 - July 7 (Ski Trip) 2009

Land Cost: \$5,500



Denali, located in Alaska and at the highest latitude, will be the coldest of the seven summits. Having recently climbed Mt. Everest, I will be acclimatized to the altitude and subzero temperatures.

Elbrus (18,510ft/5,642m) Eurasia

Trip dates: July 12 - 26, 2009

Land Costs: \$5,000.



Elbrus, a moderate climb in Russia, is a possible ski descent. With good weather this trip would allow me to recharge my batteries, mentally and physically.

Kilimanjaro (19,340ft/5895m) Africa

Trip Dates: August 2 – August 16, 2009

Land Cost: \$5,700.00



Kilimanjaro, located in equatorial Tanzania is one of the easier ascents. Climbing through climates ranging from savannah to high alpine, this expedition will be the experience of a lifetime

Carstenz Pyramid (16,023ft/4500m) Oceania

Trip Dates: November 22- December 9, 2009

Land cost: \$18,750



Carstenz Pyramid in New Guinea is an easier climb, but has raised prices due to its remote location. A helicopter is needed to fly into it over a privately owned copper mine. Shrouded in clouds, surrounded by jungle and stone age people it was not climbed until 1962.

Vinson (16,067ft/4,897m) Antarctica

Trip Dates: January 7 - January 27, 2010

Trip Cost: \$31,300.00



Mount Vinson is the second most expensive of all seven summits because its location requires many different forms of transport. It will be amazing to climb where the sun is always above the horizon. Mt. Vinson will be my last of the seven summits.

Peak Resume: 1996-2008



1996 Mt. Rainier: Age 4



1997 Mt. Baker: Age 5



1998 Salt Lake Twins: Age 5