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Highest Freestanding Mountain expedition in aid of Lymphoma.

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For mountaineer Robby Kojetin, planning the next expedition starts on the plane home from the last one.

The Johannesburg based climber, who survived a near crippling accident, summited Everest last year to raise awareness of Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma, and the need for early diagnosis of the cancer and receiving the correct treatment.

Kojetin, who lost a dear friend and mentor to lymphoma, was the 17th South African to reach the top of Mount Everest in Nepal, which is 8848m above sea level. He has now set his sights on Africa's highest peak, Mount Kilimanjaro. (Kilimanjaro – which means Where God Lives in Swahili – is in Tanzania and is the highest freestanding mountain in the world at 5895m above sea level.)

At his side will be Lymphoma survivors; Ilse-Mari Hanekom, Lionel Greenberg and Johann Enslin.

Ilse-Mari Hanekom, known for her television appearances in Big Brother South Africa, was diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma in February 2008, two weeks after getting engaged. She has been in remission since June 2008 and displays a passion for hiking in the Drakensberg.

Another Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma survivor with a passion for hiking in the Drakensberg is Lionel Greenberg. He has completed the Comrades and Two Oceans marathons several times and is in remission.

Thirty-eight-year-old Centurion martial artist, mountain biker and Lymphoma survivor, Johann Enslin, completes the lineup. The four of them form the Team of Hope and are scheduled to summit Kilimanjaro early next month (May 2010).

Robby was asked whether Kilimanjaro would be a bit of a let-down after Everest. "The way I see it, a chance to get out climbing is always an awesome adventure. Kilimanjaro, like any high-altitude peak, should never be underestimated. Even if I have been much higher, the risks and the responsibilities are still present."

"For me, climbing is about adventure and the challenges of each unique trip, not just about altitude records. I enjoy any time I get to spend climbing and also sharing my spirit of adventure with others as they set their own altitude record."

Kojetin says awareness of lymphoma, a cancer of the lymphatic system which damages the body's immune system, is very low in South Africa and because symptoms are very similar to other illnesses such as flu can often be misdiagnosed".

Around 360 000 new cases of lymphoma are diagnosed globally each year. Although lymphoma strikes both sexes and all races, ages and socio-economic tiers, it is slightly more prevalent in men – with about 166 000 (58%) of the 286 000 people diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma and 38 000 (60%) of the 62 000 people diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma worldwide being male.

The expedition takes places between May 2 and 10.

To mark the hosting of the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa in June a soccer ball with messages of hope from lymphoma survivors inscribed on it will be taken along to the summit.

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