

## **Big brother cancer survivor takes on the boys, as they attempt to conquer the highest peak in Africa**

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She was, is and will always be the ultimate survivor! (or is it housemate?) Ilse-Mari Hanekom known for her Big Brother South Africa fame, was diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma in February 2008.

Her diagnosis was only two weeks after she got engaged. With the support of her family, friends, fiancé, her religion and her high spirits, she endured the side effects of her chemotherapy and has been in remission since June 2008.

She displays a passion for hiking in the Drakensberg and Lesotho mountain ranges. This has made her a perfect candidate for a Lymphoma awareness raising climb to the top of Africa.

Around 360 000 new cases of Lymphoma are diagnosed globally each year. 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.

The causes are unknown but the most common early symptoms of Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma is:

- Painless swelling of the lymph nodes, usually in the neck, armpit, groin or abdomen
- Night sweats or a recurring fever.
- Tiredness and weight loss.
- Unexplained fever.
- A cough or breathlessness

Ilse-Mari will embark on this expedition of Mount Kilimanjaro, celebrating every day she is granted health, spirit and laughter, carrying a message of hope to the summit on behalf of other Lymphoma survivors.

She will be climbing Kilimanjaro as a member of the Team of Hope. The Team will be captained by Robby Kojetin, the 17th South African to summit Mount Everest.

Ilse-Mari is the only lady on the team, and she will be out to show the boys a thing or two. Claiming that she will be the first to the top!

The team has been training together, and excitement is building as they are scheduled to depart at 22h00 on Friday the 30<sup>th</sup> of April.



Caption: Ilse-Mari Hanekom hiking in the Drakensberg.

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