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Meet a Scientologist—Anna Koska, Climbing Mount Kilimanjaro to Save Lives

Some take up mountain climbing for exercise, others for sport. Scientologist Anna Koska and three other mothers from the United Kingdom climbed the highest mountain in Africa to save lives. Her video is one of 200 "Meet a Scientologist" videos available on the Scientology website at www.Scientology.org.

Every year, unsafe injections infect 230,000 with HIV, 1 million with Hepatitis C and 21 million with Hepatitis B, resulting in 1,300,000 deaths. In Africa alone, 20 million injections are performed annually using syringes contaminated with blood carrying the HIV virus.

Four mothers traveled from the UK and Italy to Tanzania in November 2010 to launch a major public awareness campaign in the country by climbing Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa.

Scientologist Anna Koska undertook this project on behalf of the [SafePoint Trust](#), a UK-based charity founded by her husband Marc Koska. The mission of SafePoint is to end syringe re-use to prevent the spread of disease through contaminated injections.

To prepare for the rigors of the 5,895 metres (19,341 foot) climb, Koska says they started training three months in advance. Her own workouts included three-mile runs three times a week and two 11-mile hill hikes carrying 7kg backpacks.

The women completed the climb in November 2010, reaching the summit in just under seven days. Koska, who had known one of the team of four for six years, met and got to know the others on this project. She describes them all as “extremely capable, feisty and brave women and mothers who felt honored to act as ambassadors for SafePoint and helped raise awareness for injection safety.”

Koska was delighted with the way her three children, ages 7, 10 and 12, embraced her taking on this challenge.

“They were incredibly supportive and proud of what I was doing,” she says. “They even made me ‘survival kits’ to take with me that included batteries for my torch, chocolate bars, a little jar ‘filled with love,’ a sick bag for altitude sickness and Band-Aids in case I fell and grazed my knee.

They were simply fantastic. To know they were behind me made it so much easier.”

One of the most disturbing and poignant moments occurred at 4,554 metres (14,940 feet) in the shadow of Kibo Peak in subzero temperatures and howling winds. Koska and the other women put on a skit for the team of guides and porters to help them understand the women’s purpose in carrying out the climb.

“We showed how HIV is caught by letting a healthcare worker utilize a used syringe on a patient,” says Koska. “They were shocked. They had never heard that used syringes could spread disease.”

One man told Koska he had allowed a doctor to immunize his three daughters with a used syringe. He had no idea it could harm them. Another always wondered why several children in his village had the HIV virus even though their parents did not. Now he understands and will educate his village and help stop the spread of the pernicious disease.

The weeklong trek, which kicked off the first phase of SafePoint’s Tanzania campaign, raised enough funds for an entire shipping container of syringes to be donated to the country. Learning about the program, famous East African comedian Masanja became a SafePoint Ambassador. In Dar El Salaam, the business capital of Tanzania, he joined the women at a press conference attended by 25 TV and radio news reporters to bring the word to the people of Tanzania: “*Mara moja katika maisha, mara nguni ni kifo.*” A syringe used once is life. Used twice is death.

View the Anna Koska video at www.Scientology.org.

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The popular "Meet a Scientologist" profiles on the Church of Scientology International Video Channel at Scientology.org now total more than 200 broadcast-quality documentary videos featuring Scientologists from diverse locations and walks of life. The personal stories are told by Scientologists who are educators, teenagers, skydivers, a golf instructor, a hip-hop dancer, IT manager, stunt pilot, mothers, fathers, dentists, photographers, actors, musicians, fashion designers, engineers, students, business owners and more.

A digital pioneer and leader in the online religious community, in April 2008 the Church of Scientology became the first major religion to launch its own official YouTube Video Channel, which has now been viewed by millions of visitors.



Scientologist Anna Koska (far right) at the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro Kibo Peak with the team of four mothers who climbed to end the spread of disease through contaminated syringes.



The entire team—four mothers and their guides and porters—who climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro on behalf of the SafePoint Trust in November 2010.