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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CLIMB FOR KIDS CONQUERS MT. RAINIER IN HOPES OF CONQUERING FETAL SYNDROMES:
FAMILY BATTLED RARE FETAL SYNDROME, NOW TURNS THEIR PASSION OF CLIMBING TO EFFORTS OF
RAISING MONEY AND AWARENESS**

Seattle, WA – It takes a lot of courage and physical ability to take on a mountain climb to the top of peaks such as Mt. Rainier, but for one man and his crew, it started with a passion for life and those lost. On Monday, August 25, 2008, Climb for Kids will make its inaugural climb up Mt. Rainier in efforts to raise awareness of and fund research for fetal syndromes such as Twin-to-Twin Transfusion Syndrome (TTTS).

Matt and Ellen Kowalczyk know all too well what it is like to experience the joy of being pregnant with twins, but unfortunately, have also shared the ups and downs of experiencing a lesser known about fetal syndrome called TTTS. At 15 weeks into their pregnancy, the Kowalczyk's twins were experiencing discordant blood and nutrient flow through shared vessels across the placenta that causes one baby to receive too much, while the other receives too little. Most research shows that the disease is approximately 90% fatal if undiagnosed or untreated.

"I realize how incredibly fortunate our situation was [with] the doctors, the facilities, the successful surgeries and, most of all, the amazing amount of support provided by our family and friends. On top of all that, we were fortunate enough to have the best medical insurance in the world. Ellen and I have read horror stories of doctors not properly treating TTTS and incorrectly advising mothers to terminate a pregnancy. On top of that, a lot of medical insurance won't cover the costs," said Kowalczyk, Founder and Director of Climb for Kids.

After a minimally invasive in-utero surgical procedure that would laser the shared vessels closed, at 29 weeks gestation, the Kowalczyk's twins, Ella and Emma were born. Upon celebrating their miracles, the Kowalczyk's created Climb for Kids as a way to increase awareness of TTTS and to give back to organizations that fight it and other fetal distresses. However, their celebration of defeating TTTS was short-lived, as the Kowalczyk's experienced the tragedy of losing Emma at 4 months old to an infection caused by surgery to repair a hole in her heart.

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“[Emma] gave us a great many gifts. Some are harder to realize than others. She was the poster child for perseverance and strength. Her lessons need to be passed on as far and as wide as possible,” said Kowalczyk.

After a very emotional few months, Kowalczyk is now focusing his attention on promoting and building the Climb for Kids organization and will join five other climbers in attempting to reach Mt. Rainier’s summit on Monday, August 25th. Together the team has raised nearly \$32,000 for fetal support and research. This year’s sole beneficiary is the Fetal Hope Foundation of Denver, Colorado whose mission is to provide support, provide information, fund research, increase awareness and be an outlet for leading medical information pertaining to fetal distresses and syndromes.

“We are honored and grateful to be the beneficiary of this event. My hopes is for us to further partner on fundraising efforts and mutual support in our missions that allows us to more effectively strive towards helping those in need, in education for both families affected and health professionals,” said Lonnie Somers, CEO and Founder of the Fetal Hope Foundation.

Kowalczyk’s vision for Climb for Kids is to host 4 climbs throughout the United States with over 30 climbers pledging to fundraise \$5,000 each. Including sponsorships, this amount would surpass his organization’s fundraising goal of \$100,000 per year.

“We first learned of Climb for Kids through our relationship with Evergreen Hospital, our Seattle TTTS RFH title sponsor and facility where Matt and his wife were treated. Our organizations share the same mission and with their generous support and friendship, we will make a major impact in changing the course of fetal distress and syndromes, much the same way that Susan G. Komen has done for breast cancer,” said Lonnie Somers.

For more information on Climb for Kids or the Mt. Rainier climb on Monday, please visit www.climbforkids.org.

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