

"A WALK THROUGH THE CLOUDS" INDEPENDENCE

Dear TRPC members:

My name is Tom Byrnes, a member since January of this year. I paddle a Cross-Fire (K-1) and learned to roll last fall, thanks to Jeff Prycl and other friends. On Sunday, May 16, I paddled the Loop of the Lower Yough. I really enjoyed it and ended up swimming a handful of times (I lost count.) I better get right to the point of this letter.

On July 4 of this year, I am going to hike Pikes Peak in Colorado. If you were at the May meeting, you already know the rest of this letter. If you weren't there, this will be new business.

I am going to hike up the trail to raise money for the National Head injury Foundation and the Keystone State Head Injury Foundation. Why do they need money? Those foundations do many things for the head injured population and their families.

Because of advancements in medical technology, life-flight helicopters, emergency medical teams, etc., many more patients are surviving traumatic head injury and therefore a select population of individuals are kept alive. Some may do their best to return to a normal life like before, and many others will never be able to get that far.

Those foundations improve the lives of the head injured, and give their families more support. I am head injured and the State Foundation helped my family and myself through support groups, information, and bringing about the presence of many different resources that were available for my family's use.

They also provide public awareness and education about head injury through presentations and different activities -- this hike is part of that. Advocacy is also directed to people who can promote the full integration into the community of persons with brain injury. And finally, advocacy for traumatic brain injury legislation. A final fact that we, the head injured community and professionals want to be realized, is that head injury is its own entity.

I need to raise \$1,500. If you decide you will donate, thank you, and make your tax deductible check payable to "Walk Through The Clouds." The Walk Through The Clouds Foundation has done this since 1986. The founders are Dave and Joyce Meurer. In 1986, after their daughter sustained a traumatic brain injury, Dave and Joyce Meurer realized that the grandeur of Pikes Peak could serve as the inspiring symbol for a national fund raiser. They supply the event, staffing, recruitment, collection, mailing, and disbursement for this event. Forty percent of the money goes to the National Foundation, forty percent to the State Foundation, and twenty percent to Walk Through The Clouds.

How can you donate? You can call me at (814) 623-2053 and tell me your address or leave a message on my machine and I'll send you a Pikes Peak brochure, or you can send a check to me at:

Tom Byrnes - Pikes Peak Hike
652 West Pitt Street
Bedford, PA 15522-1246

Thanks again, maybe I'll see you on the river.

Sincerely,

Thomas D. Byrnes