

CHARITY

Qatar-Based All-Female Group to Attempt to Climb Mt Kilimanjaro Summit

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An all-female group from Qatar will attempt to climb to the summit Mount Kilimanjaro in Moshi, Tanzania in February 2015 to raise funds for the Kilimanjaro Orphanage Centre.

Leading the team is British Shefa Ali who works at Sidra Medical and Research Centre (Sidra). Joining her from Sidra are American Clinical Informatist Michelle Hassani and Sudanese Project Manager Hadiel Kulaib. In addition, two females from Dubai, UAE, Syrian/American Lena Arkawi and British/Nigerian Amanda Owusu, have joined the Qatar team on their climb to Mt Kilimanjaro. 'We are definitely a diverse group of determined ladies,' said Ali.

On what influenced the climb to Mt Kilimanjaro. Ali said:

In the summer of 2013, I came across a clip about Kilimanjaro on YouTube and the mountain just captivated me. This expedition is a symbolic representation of many things to me. For one, the act of climbing and conquering a peak is representative of women who have overcome challenging situations in their lives. I want to climb Kilimanjaro for many reasons: I wanted to learn the value in enjoying the process, the training, the preparing, buying of the equipment, selecting the group, the team spirit, the organising of the trip. I wanted to challenge myself, my mind and my body. The ultimate reason is inspiration, I was to get back the feeling of being inspired and I want to inspire other people. I am doing this for me, my family and my friends and women everywhere. I want to re-discover wonder.

Although this is her first climb, Ali began physically preparing for it in September 2014. She said:



Shefa Ali, Team Leader

I got myself a trainer and we focus on core strength. In addition to that, I spend an hour and a half on the treadmill on incline daily. I know that it will be the most physically demanding thing I have ever done and some of my teammates too, but I hope it will also be the most rewarding...it is my first climb and I am really excited, with a tiny undercurrents of nervousness. I am not a climber but I hope that my experience can highlight that ordinary people can do extraordinary things.'

The five ladies will be funding the cost of the climb themselves, so any donations will be going to the orphanage 100%. The team will be visiting the orphanage when they visit Tanzania in February. So far, the team has raised QR19,000 for the Kilimanjaro Orphanage Centre located in Moshi, Tanzania. They hope to raise QR30,000. 'However, I hope to beat my goal and raise as much as possible for this worthy cause...my Xtreme dream is that we can make a positive impact on these children's lives and help in any way possible,' said Ali. According to her, the climb itself is costing around US\$3000 excluding airfare, clothing and equipment required for the expedition.

Raise funds to the Kilimanjaro Orphanage Centre is part of Ali's religious beliefs. She said:

Islam and the Quran place great importance on the treatment of the orphans. Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) was himself an orphan. Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) said, 'Whoever caresses the head of an orphan (in affection), solely for the sake of Allah, a good deed will be written to his account for every hair over which he passed his hand' – narrated by Abu Hurairah.'

The climb is also a part of Ali's goal for 2015, which is to do more charity work.

During the festive vacation, I did some volunteer work in an orphanage in Karachi. Spending time at the orphanage was very humbling. I suppose Mother Teresa got it right when she said, 'the problem in the world is that we have all just forgotten that we belong to each other.' I decided that my focus for 2015 will be to stand against forgetting that. Imagine a circle of compassion, and then no one standing outside of that circle. We would all stand together, the poor, the powerless, the voiceless and those whose dignity has been denied and who burden is more than they can bare. There is no them and us. Just us. Standing together in our humanity.'

For more more information or to donate, visit [Shefa's 'Walk In Their Shoes' Campaign](#).

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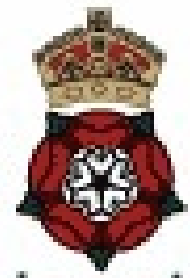
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