



Three Victoria runners to cross the Gobi Desert to help find a cure for breast cancer

June 15, 2006, Victoria, British Columbia-- A year from now Victoria ultra-marathoner Rob Mackay will lead the first all-Canadian team of three (Donna Carrigan, Donald Peterson) to run across the Gobi Desert in the fourth running of The Gobi March.

The Gobi March is a six stage, 250-kilometre (155 miles) ultra-marathon run over seven days across the great Gobi Desert in northwest China near the border with Mongolia. Competitors are required to carry all their own food and gear on their backs with only water being provided along with a space in a tent over the week.

The Gobi is the world's largest cold winter desert and is made up of mountains, rocks, grasslands, salt flats and sand dunes. In parts of the Gobi temperatures can go down to -32.8 °C in winter while summertime temperatures can go up to 45 °C. This region is generally characterized by extreme dryness, especially during the winter and by icy sandstorms and snowstorms in spring and early summer.

Team Canada is made up of three Victorians who will run to raise money and awareness for the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation while trying to reach a first place finish as a team.

“We have all been affected by breast cancer,” says Mackay. “Both my mother and grandmother survived it.”

Team member Donna Carrigan was faced with the news of a breast tumor at 18, and attributes advances in research to her diagnosis and treatment.

“Current awareness of breast cancer in Canada made all the difference in finding the tumor,” she says. “We hope that a first place finish will help us to reach a fundraising goal of \$25,000 and hopefully there will be lots more stories like mine.”

“The Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation is proud to support Team Canada’s fundraising initiative as their efforts also represent what we stand for as well – such as the hope and the quest to achieve something great,-- which is, in our case, a future without breast cancer, and their fundraising efforts will help us get there,” said Marcia Harrison, Senior Director of Development for the BC/Yukon Chapter of the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation.



About 'Team Canada'

Hailing from the mountains of North Vancouver, captain Rob Mackay will lead Team Canada in Gobi March 2007. Rob's thirst for adventure has taken him to trek the Annapurna range in Nepal, ride the Trans-Manchurian train from Beijing to Moscow and in 2005 finish the Marathon Des Sables otherwise known as 'The Toughest Footrace on Earth.'

Victoria native Donald Peterson was introduced to the multi-stage ultra-marathon concept at a slide show Mackay gave of his Marathon des Sables experience. Hooked instantly, he is craving the mental and physical challenge. He is drawn by the adventure and the accomplishment of doing something that so few people will ever do. As a former member of the military Donald's key role will be managing the logistical needs of the team. His discipline and acute eye for detail will be a foundation for Team Canada's road to the Gobi March.

Born in northern British Columbia, Donna Carrigan has often embraced challenges in life. Working at a management consulting firm in Victoria means she faces challenges daily. Although Donna is a relative newcomer to running, this race appeals to her competitive nature. She is motivated by the fact that very few women compete in ultra-marathons and by her personal experiences with a benign breast tumor.

The Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation

Established in 1986, the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation is dedicated to creating a future without breast cancer. The foundation works collaboratively to fund, support and advocate for: relevant and innovative research, meaningful education and awareness programs, early diagnosis and effective treatment, and a positive quality of life for those living with breast cancer. The organization's fundraising – through the annual Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation CIBC Run for the Cure, other special events, corporate sponsorships and donations – has enabled the foundation to allocate millions of dollars in grants for breast cancer projects and services since its inception.

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For further media information contact:

Rob Mackay, Team Canada - (250) 595-5814