When Hepatitis C Takes Us to Mountaintops

May 27, 2014 By Lucinda K. Porter RN

Hepatitis C comes into our lives uninvited. Each of us react differently to this viral intruder, but few of us do what James McGuffey is about to do; he is going to scale a mountain. On June 4, 3014, James and his 17-year-old son Kaleb, will attempt one of the most difficult climbs in the lower 48 states: Washington's Mt. Rainier. James and Kaleb are doing this to raise money and awareness for hepatitis C. Neither James nor Kaleb have hepatitis C, but James' wife Carleen does.

Carleen was diagnosed with hepatitis C when she was pregnant with her sixth child. She contracted hepatitis C from a blood transfusion more than a quarter century ago. None of their six children are infected, but they nearly lost their mother to it. A rare complication occurred during a liver biopsy nearly killed Carleen. She has suffered from multiple complications, during which James managed to take care of their six children, including an infant.

Hepatitis C could have drowned this family in pain and fear, but the McGuffeys are seeking higher ground in the form of a 14,000+ foot high mountain. James named this event, *Climbing for Carleen,* and is raising money for the . I applaud James and Kaleb; they are shining examples of the expression, "When the going gets tough, the tough get going."

I wish the McGuffey family the very best as they meet the challenges ahead. Whether it is living with hepatitis C, climbing Mt Rainier, or worrying about a loved one who is sick, this virus tests us. We can deny it, resist it, learn from it, or grow from it. Some will even climb mountains because if it.

How do you look at hepatitis C. Is it a mountain to climb or deep hole that you fell in to? If it is a hole, put down the shovel and look up. Many of us are here to help you climb out of that hole. It may not be as impressive as Mt Rainier, but climbing out of a hole can take just as much effort, and the view from the top is just as spectacular.

Donations may be sent to *Climbing for Carleen*.

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