



The Chicago Lighthouse
for People Who are Blind or Visually Impaired



IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 20, 2009

Contact:

Dominic Calabrese, The Chicago Lighthouse
(312) 997-3662

dominic.calabrese@chicagolighthouse.org

Brenda Schulze, The Chicago Lighthouse
(312) 666-1331

Brenda.schulze@chicagolighthouse.org

Shannon Smiley, Global Explorers

shannon@globalexplorers.org

(877) 627-1425

Chicago Lighthouse Recruits Blind and Sighted Students for International Volcano Climbing Adventure with Renowned Explorer

CHICAGO – Ten Chicago area students, half of whom are blind or visually impaired, will experience the adventure of a lifetime this coming June when they join renowned blind explorer Erik Weihenmayer in scaling one of Mexico's highest volcanoes.

Recruited by The Chicago Lighthouse, the students will travel to Mexico City June 6 where they will join up with a group of their Mexican counterparts and Weihenmayer, the only blind man to summit Mt. Everest.

From there, they will head for the volcano, Iztaccihuati, named after an Aztec princess. Under Weihenmayer's direction, the blind and sighted students from both countries will work together in scaling the higher limits of the volcano and in the process, break down barriers and misperceptions about what people with disabilities can do. As part of the project, students will also interact with local residents in conducting a tree planting service at the base of the volcano.

"This event will not only enable the students to experience a truly life changing experience but will teach them an invaluable lesson in overcoming physical obstacles while gaining a new appreciation for teamwork and fellowship," noted Dr. Janet Szlyk, the Lighthouse's executive director.

In addition, the expedition party will participate in a special VIP event in Mexico City celebrating the release of the Spanish edition of Weihenmayer's book, *Touch the Top of the World*, as well as the Mexican premier of his recent movie, *Blindsight*.

The Global Explorers Leading the Way Mexico Expedition, scheduled to last till June 14, is being jointly sponsored by the Lighthouse, Ojos que Sienten, a Mexican based non-profit, and Global Explorers, a Colorado based non-profit.

The Global Explorers Leading the Way program began four years ago as a dream of Weihenmayer, the only blind man who also climbed the 'Seven Summits,' the tallest peak on every continent, and Global Explorers. The program teams high school and college students who are blind or visually impaired and sighted as well as deaf for an unparalleled adventure exploring science, service, leadership and culture. Since its pilot trip four years ago, hundreds of students have traveled on life-changing expeditions across the world and inspired millions more through Global Explorers Leading the Way Features on the Travel Channel, ABC, and CBS Sunday Morning.

Founded in 1906, The Chicago Lighthouse is a nationally acclaimed not-for-profit agency committed to providing the highest quality educational, clinical, vocational and rehabilitation services for children, youth and adults who are blind or visually impaired, including deaf-blind and multi-disabled. Through its comprehensive range of programs and services, the Lighthouse respects personal dignity and partners with individuals to enhance independent living and self-sufficiency. The agency is a leader, innovator and advocate for people who are blind or visually impaired, enhancing the quality of life for all individuals involved and for the community.

For further information on the expedition, contact Brenda Schulze at (312) 666-1331, ext. 3138.

###