

Press Release
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Contact:

Kari Redfield, 602-326-1261

kari@curecasey.org or go to curecasey.org

Climb4Casey at Phoenix Rock Gym Will Raise Money for Friend Battling Rare Cancer

Phoenix — Last September, 30-year-old Casey Kelso, a software engineer in Phoenix who loves climbing, biking and other outdoor adventure, was diagnosed with a rare cancer. His friends and loved ones are rallying together to support him and need your help.

A fundraiser, Climb4Casey, will be held at Phoenix Rock Gym, 1353 E. University Drive, in Tempe, Ariz., Sunday, Jan. 11, from 7 to 10 p.m.

The fundraising is necessary because Kelso's health insurance company, Principal Financial Group, claims that the chemotherapy treatment (using the drugs Gemzar and Taxotere) is experimental, and refuses to pay for lifesaving treatment that costs \$10,000 for each three-week round. Kelso's tumor is non-differentiated, but factors indicate that it is a soft-tissue cancer called leiomyosarcoma. Gemcitabine plus Taxotere is the preferred treatment for leiomyosarcoma, and gives Kelso the best chance.

While the Kelso family of Rockford, Ill., battles with the insurance company, his loved ones and friends are paying for treatments out-of-pocket.

Climb4Casey is sponsored by the owner and managers of Phoenix Rock Gym, who have generously offered use of the gym and trained staff. Instead of normal entrance and equipment rental fees, a \$10 donation is requested.

"It will be mean fun and laughter for diehard climbers, newbies and families alike," says Mark Stiles, a friend of Kelso's who helped organize the event. "If you've thought about climbing, then come, give it a try. The staff of Phoenix Rock Gym is there to help get you started, and plenty of experienced climbers stand by ready to show you the ropes — pun intended! And if you're a climber — well, come on down! It's for an absolutely wonderful person."

During the evening, \$5 tickets will be sold for prize drawings. Prizes include a climbing rope from Arizona Hiking Shack; (hikingshack.com), a No. 2 Black Diamond camalot; (blackdiamond.com), an outdoor guided climbing day with certified guide Geir Hundal (geir.com); a \$50 gift certificate and beer steins from Four Peaks Brewery (fourpeaks.com); memberships to Phoenix Rock Gym (phoenixrockgym.com) and Arizona on the Rocks (azontherocks.com); a 1-hour massage from licensed massage therapist Chris R. Thrush; a Trek Vapor bicycling helmet from Landis Cyclery (landiscyclery.com); \$25 gift certificates to Casey Moore's Oyster House; (caseymoore.com) and a \$20 gift certificate to REI. A day-of silent auction will feature an outdoor climbing trip with guide Mike Knarzer; (outdooradventuresaz.com); a VO2 max test with coach Darrin Permenter of Coyotes Athletic Centers (coyotesathleticcenters.com); and a climbing rope from Hundal. For a full list, go to curecasey.org. People also can buy tickets online. The drawing will be conducted in Illinois in March and broadcast via webcam.

Frank Hertz, a local lawyer whose life has been changed by a loved one's cancer, will make a \$500 match if someone donates \$500 the night of Climb4Casey.

"Let me just say what a tremendous individual Casey is," says Marcy Makarewicz, who helped put the event together.

“He will go out of his way to help anyone and is one of the most amazing people I’ve had the fortune of knowing.”

Donations are also welcome on the website, curecasey.org.

The follow-up is Spin4Casey, an indoor bicycle spinning event, scheduled for Jan. 31 from 4 to 5:30 p.m. at Coyotes Athletic Center in Tolleson, Ariz. Spots are limited. Participants can register at curecasey.org.