

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Firefighter to Climb for a Cure

FREDERICKTOWN – Climbing high-rise buildings in the Knox County area is not heard of, but what is frequently heard of are the large numbers of people suffering from Leukemia and Lymphoma. Firefighter Jason Bostic, of the Fredericktown Community Fire District, is joining in raising money to support the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society by competing in a Firefighter Stair Climb in Seattle, Washington. The 16th Annual Scott Firefighter Stair Climb Challenge will be held on March 4, 2007 at the Columbia Center, formerly known as the Bank of America Tower. The tower stands as the second tallest building west of the Mississippi at 788 feet of vertical elevation. The challenge for firefighters is to climb the 69 flights of stairs in full firefighter turnout gear while breathing air from their SCBA. Bostic has never competed in a challenge such as this, and in this area, firefighters are not faced with battling high-rise fires which makes the training more difficult.

His motivation for participation is his mother's illness of Chronic Myelogenous Leukemia. This disease almost took her life in 1986 and continued to try and kill her until she received a bone marrow transplant in 1990. The unmatched, unrelated bone marrow transplant was the first of its kind at The Ohio State University Hospital and was before the James Cancer Institute came to fruition. "I've blocked out a lot of memories, things that kids should remember I can't, which has really taken a toll on me. I know from pictures what mom looked like before she was diagnosed, but really I only remember what she looked like once everything started happening to her. The one thing you never forget is the pain, the suffering, and wondering what is going to happen to your mom; that's the motivation I use to push myself to get ready for this. No child should have to watch a parent endure the suffering and pain. If my work and fundraising helps even one person, I will feel I have accomplished something. I want to do what I can for my community and my country to help raise funding for the Leukemia Society so that they can do more with research and treatment."

Jason has known about the firefighter challenge for several years now, and his goal to compete in this has been a source of motivation to get into shape. "In 2003, I weighed 230 pounds. Like many Americans, I was overweight, out of shape, and easily winded. I would go into a fire and my breathing air in the SCBA would not last long. I either needed to make changes to my life or face health problems and be a statistic." Over a period of time making changes to his eating habits and daily life, Jason has lowered his weight to 183 pounds and also built strength and endurance. His preparation has not stopped here. "I can't simply stop now that I have just lost some weight. My workout has to continue to prepare me for the challenge of climbing stairs while wearing the weight of my firefighting gear. I will be adding to my training by using a weighted vest to simulate the weight of my gear and simply working out in my fire gear."

The equipment that Jason will be wearing to compete weighs a total of 45 pounds and the added weight makes you feel as he puts it, “like you are trying to run in waist-deep water.” Jason has also noticed additional benefits from his hard work. “I can go into a fire and have my SCBA last for 3-4 times longer that it used to under working conditions.”

Over the coming months, Jason will be campaigning to raise funds through a personalized website set up by the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, through letter writing, and through local one-on-one contact. The website is <http://www.active.com/donate/ff07/fcfd> and offers donors the ability to make secure contributions in any amount. All funds submitted go directly to the national Leukemia and Lymphoma Society and do support local families as well as the research for a cure. “The Fredericktown community and Knox County as a whole helped our family in many ways during mom’s battle with Leukemia. I just want to find another way to give back.” A link to the fundraising page can also be found on the department website at <http://www.fredericktownfire.net>

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