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Fundraising Is Still Open for Breathe Extreme Challenge

By Cynthia Cheng

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Have you ever wanted to rappel down a 15-story building the way you'd scale down a mountain? Here's your chance. To fundraise for programming support, Breathe California of the Bay Area is hosting the third annual Breathe Extreme Challenge on Friday, May 10. On that day, you can rappel down the Hyatt Regency in Santa Clara.

"If we have more than 90 people registered, the only people who can rappel down the 15 stories would be the first 90 people who raised \$1,000," says Margo Sidener, CEO of Breathe California of the Bay Area. "If we don't have 90 people who raise \$1,000, which we haven't so far, we'll have slots to raffle off."

"It takes about 12 minutes per person to rappel down the building from the roof," Sidener says. "Each participant gets their own time slot. Their family and friends can come and watch. The Hyatt will offer lemonade and popcorn, and there will be sofas, chairs, and shaded umbrellas set out at the ground level for guests."

Sidener assures interested participants that this challenge is very safe. The event producer, Over the Edge, has hosted over 200 rappel events.

"They bring in the safety gear, they transport the cranes up onto the roof, and they do the building check," Sidener says. "They'll suit you up and they'll do a practice with you where you try dropping down one floor first. The scariest moment is when you take that first step off the roof. The people I've talked to who have done this loved it. You can see the Bay from the top."

Sidener adds that everyone who raises money would have a chance to participate in the event even if they don't rappel down the hotel. For example, raffle prizes up for

grabs include weekend stays at the Hyatt and restaurant meals.

"We want people to know even if they raise just \$200, it goes a long way to support our mission here for clean air and healthy lungs," Sidener says. "Donations are tax-deductible."

Santa Clara City Councilmember Teresa O'Neill will be participating in the challenge this year.



"I don't like roller coasters or even spinning teacups, so why have I agreed to rappel down the face of one of Santa Clara's tallest buildings?" O'Neill asks. "Last fall, a friend lost his 22-year old daughter to an asthma attack. Anna's shocking death made very real the epidemic of asthma and other respiratory illnesses our community is facing."

Breathe California of the Bay Area sends representatives to schools, community centers, and senior centers to facilitate their programs. Asthma management, tobacco prevention, and on-site assessments for breathing hazards are just a few of the many programs Breathe California conducts at schools. At the senior centers, the organization offers presentations and lung health screenings. According to Sidener, the schools and senior center in Santa Clara have benefited from Breathe California's visits and programs.

"We really need money for all the programming that we host here in the Bay Area," Sidener says. "We are the only organization in Silicon Valley who has hosted an event like the Breathe Extreme Challenge."

Visit <http://www.lungsrus.org> and click on the image featuring the "Breathe Xtreme Challenge." At the informational page, click on "Register Now" to set up a personal fundraising page. The \$50 registration fee counts toward the fundraising goal. Call (408) 998-5865 for more information.



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