



NEWS



News Headlines 02/14/2023

- Apple Valley firefighters to climb skyscraper to battle cancer

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By Rene Ray De La Cruz, Victorville Daily Press

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San Bernardino County Fire paramedic/firefighter Colby Jackson will join fellow firefighters as they ascend nearly 70 floors of the Columbia Center skyscraper in Seattle during the 32nd annual Leukemia & Lymphoma Society Firefighter Stairclimb fundraiser in March.

Several Apple Valley Fire Protection District firefighters are preparing to climb nearly 70 floors of the Columbia Center skyscraper to raise money to fight blood-related cancers.

The firefighters will participate in the 32nd annual Leukemia & Lymphoma Society Firefighter Stairclimb fundraiser on March 12 inside the tallest building in Washington state.

Nearly 2,000 firefighters from around the nation year suit up in full turnout gear, weighing over 60 pounds, while on-air for the annual stair climbing event with the theme “Climb. Conquer. Cure.”

The sold-out event to date has raised over \$24 million for LLS.

The firefighters

Those attempting to climb all 1,356 steps of Columbia Center from the AVFPD include firefighter/engineer/paramedic David Martinez, the District Stair Climb Team Captain.

Fire Marshal Brian Pachman, Fire Captain John Watterson, firefighter/paramedics Erwin Cuevas, Corey Fratt, and Dillon Tavolazzi.

Martinez told the Daily Press that his first LLS stair climb in 2019 was a “mind-blowing and tear-jerking” experience as he wore full turnout gear, weighing over 60 pounds, and climbed up the second-tallest skyscraper, with a 788-foot vertical elevation, west of the Mississippi.

“The auditorium at the base of the building and on each floor had pictures of people with cancer,” Martinez said. “With each step, I kept thinking of those people and the things they’ve endured.”

Pachman said he’s dedicating this year’s climb to his wife, Michelle, who’s been cancer-free for nearly 16 years.

“She had Hodgkin’s Lymphoma Stage 4,” Pachman said. “I am climbing 69 flights of stairs in full gear on air for her.”

Preparing for his third climb, Watterson said, “this climb has taken on a more personal tone since losing two family members to blood cancer-related illnesses in 2020 and 2021.”

Nearly a dozen **San Bernardino County Fire** firefighters will also participate in the climb.

“Last year was such a great success. I’m looking forward to exceeding my goals again,” said firefighter/paramedic Colby Jackson from SBC Fire Station 226.

To donate

General information and donations for the AVFPD and other climbing teams can be found online at firefighterstairclimb.org. Donations can be made by searching for participating individuals and fire departments.

Check donations can be dropped off or mailed to AVFPD Station No. 1 at 22400 Headquarters Drive in Apple Valley. Checks should be made out to the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.

<https://www.vvdailypress.com/story/news/2023/02/14/apple-valley-firefighters-to-climb-skyscraper-to-battle-cancer/69900289007/>