



2015 PROGRAM LOCATIONS

OREGON · CALIFORNIA · UTAH · MONTANA · COLORADO · WYOMING · MASSACHUSETTS · NEW YORK
NORTH CAROLINA · VIRGINIA · IDAHO · FRANCE · MEXICO · ICELAND · DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

2015 TRIBUTARY LOCATIONS

DENVER · SEATTLE · NYC · SAN FRANCISCO · MINNEAPOLIS · AUSTIN · ORLANDO
BOSTON · LOS ANGELES · D.C./BALTIMORE

MISSION

First Descents provides life-changing outdoor adventures for young adults (18-39) impacted by cancer.

WHAT

FREE kayaking, surfing and rock climbing adventures in the most epic locations around the U.S. and world.
No experience necessary!

HOW

Any young adult who has been diagnosed with cancer after the age of 15 is eligible to attend a week-long program. Interested candidates can inquire at www.FirstDescents.org/programs or give us a call! Our programs team is excited to help: **303-945-2490**

WHAT ELSE?

First Descents also offers an array of resources for young adults impacted by cancer. They can check out FirstDescents.org for more information.

"The FD experience has served as a catalyst to new pursuits in my life and opportunities that I would have never imagined possible."

-First Descents participant

"If cancer has a silver lining, it's First Descents."

-First Descents participant

"I'm already thinking about what adventures lie ahead. How I can continue to connect with other survivors, how to live more freely.

I am truly grateful for the adventure. Thanks FD."

-First Descents participant



FIRST DESCENTS

CANCER COMMUNITY AND MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS FAQ



1. WHAT IS THE AGE RANGE FOR YOUR PROGRAMS?

Primarily 18-39 years of age. We do offer one program per year for 40-49 years of age.

2. WHAT IS THE MEDICAL SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR PARTICIPANTS AT A PROGRAM?

We have a trained medical professional at each of our programs, as well as emergency response plans in place. We also operate programming in close proximity to the local medical center.

3. DO PARTICIPANTS HAVE TO KNOW HOW TO CLIMB/SURF/KAYAK

There is no experience necessary for any of our programs! We work with extremely experienced outfitters at all of our locations, and ensure top of the line instruction and safety at all times.

4. CAN PARTICIPANTS STILL BE IN TREATMENT?

Yes! We have plenty of participants who are still undergoing treatment. We ask that all of our participants go through a medical review by their physician, and submit all proper forms before we accept them to a program.

5. DO PARTICIPANTS NEED TO BE DIAGNOSED AS A YOUNG ADULT?

All eligible participants must have been diagnosed within the ages of 15-39.

6. IS TRAVEL COVERED?

We do have an opportunity for travel scholarships but ask that participants pay for their own travel when possible.

7. HOW MANY OTHER PARTICIPANTS WILL BE AT THE PROGRAM?

Our programs are capped between 12 and 15 participants to ensure the very best weekend (for FDI) or week-long experience.

FDi

WITH FIRST DESCENTS



FDi IS AN ADVENTURE WEEKEND,
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CANCER
CENTERS NATIONWIDE.

*FREE TO YOUNG ADULT CANCER
FIGHTERS AND SURVIVORS



**“THESE PROGRAMS ARE AMAZING,
& THESE ADVENTURES ARE ONE OF THE
RARE PERKS IN AN OTHERWISE PERCEIVED
PERK-LESS CANCER SCENARIO.”**

Seattle Children's Hospital

FDi (introduction) is an opportunity for young adult cancer fighters who might not be able to attend a full-length program due to health reasons, family commitments, or general hesitation. We accept YA's who have been diagnosed on/after the age of 15 but the YA must be 18+ to attend.

THESE PROGRAMS...

- De-stigmatize cancer
- Improve mental, physical and emotional state of participants.
- Reduce alienation by building a strong community within the same medical center.

FIRSTDESCENTS.ORG 303.945.2490
PETA.SHERIDAN@FIRSTDESCENTS.ORG

ADVENTURES

KAYAKING, CLIMBING, SURFING

- Or any outdoor adventure that is available in the selected region.
- Each program hosts 8-12 YA's

LOCATIONS

FDi programs are hosted in close proximity to each partnering cancer center, lowering barriers to entry & creating community amongst young adults within the same cancer center.

WE PROVIDE

- assistance identifying eligible participants
- organization & coordination of all programming, staffing, transport and logistical planning.
- co-branded informational and marketing materials.

FUNDING

First Descents offers an array of suggestions on how to fund your FDi. Please inquire for more details.



Out Living it (ON SCREEN)



THE ORIGINAL
FIRST DESCENTS
DOCUMENTARY



DIRECTED BY: Michael Brown

TOTAL RUN TIME: 42min

DOCUMENTARY SYNOPSIS

Out Living It recounts the story of young adults living with cancer who come together for a week-long adventure experience in the mountains of Colorado. It highlights the physical and psychological impact of cancer upon the lives of these survivors and documents the transformation that stems from their experiences. For some, it is the first time they have ever been in an encouraging community of peers where they are understood and supported without ever having to talk about their cancer. Each is pushed outside their personal comfort zone by whitewater kayaking and rock climbing, and by facing these challenges; they develop a new sense of identity and passion for living beyond their cancer diagnosis.

PRIMARY CHARACTERS

Scooter, Lash, Cookie, Limbo and First Descents Founder, Brad Ludden

FILM
AWARDS



FD ALUMNI SCOOTER

[NATE POST]

“DOCTORS AND MEDICINE KEPT ME ALIVE, BUT IT WAS FD THAT REALLY SHOWED ME HOW TO LIVE AGAIN.”

[BIOGRAPHY]



December 2008, I was invincible. I was 22 and had just graduated college with a great job lined up amidst the recession so to celebrate, I headed to South America for a surf trip. Everything was perfect. I have always made a point to be healthy. I run triathlons, don't smoke, don't drink much and hadn't had so much as the flu in 8 years.

That's when the aches and pains started. I found myself in the middle of South America on my own unable to hold down food and could hardly sleep, let alone hike several miles to a surf spot. Of course, being the tough guy came up with a million excuses for these symptoms: I've been doing too many 24 hour bus trips. I've been sleeping in hostels, the beds have to be hurting my back right? I've probably shouldn't only eat steak in Argentina...maybe some salad will help.

Needless to say, after three months of this, I ended up back in the States with symptoms that had only gotten worse to the point where I had lost 30 lbs and only was comfortable in a hot tub to take pressure off my back. One day, my mom found me vomiting blood all over the bathroom floor and she took me to the ER immediately.

Doctors were at a total loss. All they knew was that I had massive tumors that completely encased my abdomen, wrapped around my aorta, invaded my liver and lungs... unofficial diagnosis – screwed. After a few days the official diagnosis was Advanced Stage 4 Choriocarcinoma.

“How is this possible?” is all I could think about. Nobody in my extended my family had ever had cancer – I didn't even know anyone with cancer... so how is it possible that I did? And what about my perfect plan? My great job that was lined up, my future – everything literally disappeared in a matter of minutes. Long story short, the next 18 months involved over 200 hospital nights, 99 units of blood, 12 rounds of chemo, 2 aortic bleeds, a full aortic resection and countless doctors and surgeries – not exactly what I was thinking my first year out of college would look like.

The craziest thing though was at the end of it all I was cancer-free; declared medically stable... all of the sudden my life went from trying to survive each day to trying to truly live again. And that's when it hit me. How am I supposed to go back to the adventurous, fearless, ambitious 'pre-cancer' Nate? I was alive, physically healthy but felt like a complete shell of what I was before.

I was so overwhelmed with trying to restart my life that I became helpless. Severe depression set in. That's when I found First Descents. Finally, a group who was genuinely excited about not just being alive, but really living! Doctors and medicine kept me alive. But it was FD that really showed me how to live again. They helped me find that person I knew before getting sick and for that I am forever grateful.

[CONTACT ME WITH ANY QUESTIONS!]

EMAIL / NATHANIELPOST@GMAIL.COM

FD ALUMNI WOMBAT

[LISA BUTCH]

“AFTER A WEEK OF FUN, CHALLENGE, LAUGHTER, SUPPORT ACCOMPLISHMENT, I FELT WHOLE AGAIN FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE CANCER”

[BIOGRAPHY]



I was diagnosed with rhabdomyosarcoma in December 2006 at the age of 25. After a year of surgeries, chemotherapy, and radiation, my whole world seemed to revolve around cancer and hospital visits until it didn't anymore. Once treatment ended and I was able to go back to my old life, I felt lost and confused. Friends had moved away, gotten married, begun new careers, had babies, and I had been laying on my parent's couch.

Feeling lost and alone, I happened to discover First Descents while browsing the internet and decided to try a whitewater kayaking camp. Expecting nothing but a fun trip, I found more than I ever dreamed possible. After a week of fun, challenge, laughter, support, and accomplishment, I felt whole again for the first time since cancer. I was amazed at how participants and staff supported each other through our new challenge of learning to whitewater kayak, and how cancer was only brought up organically. Being around such a positive group who didn't get awkward when cancer was mentioned made me feel like I fit in immediately and the positivity and laughter allowed me to truly be happy for the first time in a long time.

First Descents changed my mindset from a cancer victim who felt sorry for herself to someone who knows she can overcome any obstacle or challenge, whether it be a big rapid in a river, a scary medical situation, or the challenges of everyday life. I use my experiences with First Descents as a source of strength and inspiration to make it through the hard times and for an ever-growing group of friends that feels more like family.

FD even inspired me to leave a desk job that didn't feed my soul and take the risk of attending a course to become an outdoor trip leader. Kayaking with FD re-awoke a passion in me for being outdoors and challenging myself through adventure activities, and I now lead trips for Outward Bound. Cancer tried to take away my passion for life, but I am lucky because First Descents gave it back a thousand times over.

[CONTACT ME WITH ANY QUESTIONS!]

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