



## Descubre tu Sentido | Discover your Senses

### Support US and Mexican students in volcano climb with world-famous Erik Weihenmayer

Every Mexican citizen knows of two of Mexico's highest volcanoes, Izta and Popo, which watch over Mexico City. Legend says that the tragic love of the Aztec princess Iztaccíhuatl and the warrior Popocatepetl was immortalized in Izta's womanly shape and Popo's fiery emotion. Though few have explored their talus slopes up close, they have a beauty, a history and a palpable presence that transcends their stunning visual prominence. In November 2009, an unlikely team of blind and sighted young-adults from Mexico and the United States will set off on an extraordinary journey of leadership, discovery and adventure with the nonprofits Global Explorers and Ojos que Sienten (Sight of Emotion). The team will be accompanied by **world-renowned blind climber Erik Weihenmayer and famous sighted Mexican climber Hector Ponce de Leon**. Their goal: to reach the higher limits of Iztaccíhuatl (5,000m) and in the process, to break down the barriers and misperceptions placed between those with and without disabilities.

#### Join our Cause

Weihenmayer often attributes his successful summit of Mount Everest to the support of his team, although very few of them actually stood on the summit alongside him. Just as his team included all those who supported him financially, encouraged him and believed in him, our team also knows no boundaries. We invite you to make a lasting difference in our world by joining our team through your **sponsorship**. Funds will be used to offset climbing fees and equip blind, visually impaired and sighted participants with the gear they need for the expedition. Thanks to the generosity of Fundación Televisa and Fundación Cinépolis, an eye operation will be donated for every participant who reaches the summit. Individuals are only as strong as the team which supports them; thank you for learning more in the Sponsorship section below.

#### Sharing the story with the world

Coinciding with the Spanish translation of Weihenmayer's book *Touch the Top of the World* and the Mexican premiere of his film *Blindsight*, the climbing expedition seeks to challenge, inspire and educate. Through imagery and stories collected by sighted and blind students on their climb as well as at high profile events in Mexico City, we will share their story with the world. Together, the team will also explore Mexican culture and engage with locals in a service project.

#### Creating Confident Leaders

The *Descubre tu Sentido* expedition strives to teach: awareness, acceptance and tolerance; self-confidence and leadership skills; appreciation of global interdependence; and a sense that students of all ages and abilities have a role to play in making a positive difference in the world today. In addition to Weihenmayer and Ponce de Leon, the team will also be accompanied by various other prominent leaders from Mexican companies.

## Participating organizations and people:

### Global Explorers

Global Explorers (GEx) is passionate about providing the most comprehensive and genuine travel experience available to students and educators of all backgrounds and abilities. As a non-profit organization, GEx is committed to sustainable tourism and responsible global citizenship. Developed in partnership with Erik Weihenmayer, its nationally-recognized Leading the Way program is open to students of all physical abilities, ages 14 to 21. Leading the Way integrates science, service, leadership, and culture, resulting in a life-changing adventure. Far more than just a fun trip, each expedition involves preparatory curriculum prior to travel and a service leadership project post travel. Leading the Way has been featured on CBS Sunday Morning, Travel Channel, ABC Nightline and World News Tonight. HYPERLINK "http://www.globalexplorers.org" [www.globalexplorers.org](http://www.globalexplorers.org)

### Ojos que Sienten/ Sight of Emotion

By focusing on the blind and visually impaired, Gina Badenoch the Founder of Sight of Emotion/Ojos que Sienten A.C, is transforming expectations about what people with disabilities can achieve personally and professionally. Sight of Emotion (SOE) organization uses photography and sensory experiences to change both blind and sighted people's thinking with respect to human potential; regardless of physical or mental differences.

Ojos que Sienten /Sight of Emotion work towards the inclusion of blind and visually impaired people into the social, educational and working environments , while stimulating and developing their emotional, intellectual and creative potential to the maximum. It's through training, that we provide them with the necessary tools to become productive members of society. Ojos que Sienten/Sight of Emotion sensitize society into the experience of putting on the side their sight and explore a new way of perceiving and communicate by breaking down the visual barriers and use their other senses.

HYPERLINK "http://www.ojosquesienten.org" [www.ojosquesienten.org](http://www.ojosquesienten.org)

### Erik Weihenmayer:

On May 25, 2001, Erik Weihenmayer became the only blind man in history to reach the summit of the world's highest peak – Mount Everest. Additionally, he is the only blind person to have climbed the "Seven Summits," the tallest peak on every continent. He has scaled the 3,000 foot rock face of El Capitan, skied down the tallest peak in Europe, and guided Tibetan blind teenagers to 21,500 feet on the north side of Mt. Everest. Erik is also a prolific speaker and author of two books.

HYPERLINK "http://www.touchthetop.com" [www.touchthetop.com](http://www.touchthetop.com)

### Hector Ponce de Leon

Hector Ponce de Leon is a world class mountain climber and guide with nearly 25 years of experience in the mountains and faces of the main ranges of the world. A three time Everest summiter, (one of them as a guide, and in 2004 as a camera for Discovery Channel) Hector has an expertise as a guide, expedition leader and organizer that is difficult to match. His technical competence, outstanding physical capability at altitude, high safety standards, together with his people skills are a guarantee for a safe, fun, and highly instructional trip to any of the mountains where he leads trips.

HYPERLINK "http://www.hectorponcedeleon.com" [www.hectorponcedeleon.com](http://www.hectorponcedeleon.com)

## Summary

**Who:** Blind, partially sighted and sighted Mexican and American young-adults joining Erik Weihenmayer and Hector Ponce de Leon on a 5,000 m Volcano Climb.

**What:** Descubre tu Sentido (Discover your Senses) Expedition seeking to shatter expectations about what those with vision loss are capable of

**When:** November 6-14, 2009

**Where:** Mexico City and surrounding area

**Why:** The *Descubre tu Sentido* expedition strives to teach: awareness, acceptance and tolerance; self-confidence and leadership skills; appreciation of global interdependence; and a sense that students of all ages and abilities have a role to play in making a positive difference in the world today.

## Media Participation

National Mexican television station Televisa Deportes and local News Channel are reporting on story. Reforma, one of the most prominent newspapers in Mexico, will imbed a journalist on the climb and publish a feature story. Additional radio stations, magazines and other newspapers are already publishing articles in preparation for the climb.

## Equipment Needs

In order to ensure the team's safety and maximize opportunities for success, each participant will need:

Trekking, hiking boots. Waterproof.

Hard Shell Jacket with hood. Waterproof and breathable.

Hard Shell Trousers. Waterproof and breathable.

Sleeping Bag rated to at least -5 celsius.

Trekking poles/adjustable.

Sleeping pad. Full length closed cell foam or

Inflatable Therma-Rest / Sleeping pad

Down parka

Wool/synthetic hat, warm wool or

Fleece gloves, heavy wool/synthetic socks

One long sleeve polypropylene shirt and

One long sleeve polypropylene underwear

One pair midweight long underwear (fleece or polar) and one midweight long sleeve shirt.

Fleece jacket

Backpack (35 liters)

## Suggested Interviews:

-Erik Weihenmayer (Contact Shannon Smiley for details.)

-David Shurna, Executive Director, Global Explorers | Phone: 877-627-1425

-Shannon Smiley, Program Coordinator, Global Explorers | [HYPERLINK](#)

"mailto:shannon@globalexplorers.org" [shannon@globalexplorers.org](mailto:shannon@globalexplorers.org)

-Gina Badenoch, Founder, Ojos que Sienten | [HYPERLINK](#)

"mailto:ginabadenoch@ojosquesienten.com" [ginabadenoch@ojosquesienten.com](mailto:ginabadenoch@ojosquesienten.com)

-Claudia Cordova, Project Manager, Ojos que Sienten Sienten | [cordova.claudia2@gmail.com](mailto:cordova.claudia2@gmail.com)

-Santiago Lobeira, Director, Sustenta.com | [HYPERLINK](#) "mailto:slobeira@sustenta.com"

[slobeira@sustenta.com](mailto:slobeira@sustenta.com)

*"This is a great opportunity/Ojos que Sienten is offering us for the first time in Mexico. I am excited, enjoying the training and realizing there are a lot of things I can do if I take risks and believe in myself."*

*- Mexican participant training for his first climb ever, from Sight of Emotion/Ojos que Sienten A.C 2009*

*"You don't merely teach leadership you offer kids actual experience. You don't just introduce ecology you live your care for the earth with the kids. You don't just educate about global cultures, you place kids in relationship with indigenous peoples - not showing pity for what we Westerners consider poverty but appreciating differences."*

*-Parent of 2008Global Explorers participant*