

A Letter From Brandon Potter

April 2011

We held the second annual fundraiser for KVF at Jimmy's Restaurant & Bar in Aspen, Colorado on October 3rd, 2010. We had approximately 50 people in attendance and raised \$10,000 from the event. Many local businesses donated silent auction items, food, and alcohol and as always an awesome spread of food was provided by Jimmy's. All the local Aspenites who signed up for the Kilimanjaro climb were there to help out as well: Chace Dillon, Anders Gustafson, Katie Schwoerer, Eileen Tucker, and Brandon Potter. Each climber also raised \$500 for the Kili climb.

The climb was an epic one to say the least. With our 29 porters and 9 climbers we did the Umbwe route. We deviated to the western side of Kili and scaled the Western Breach known as the most technical, most difficult route on the mountain. The weather was pleasant during the day and cold and snowy at night. From our last camp at 16,000 feet, we left at 11 p.m. scaling hand and foot over the western breach in wind, snow, and darkness to summit at 5:45 a.m. Our three local guides Lazaro, Kassim, and Gift were incredible and along with Mark Ross ensured a fun, safe trip for everyone. After summiting and enjoying the sunrise with perfect timing, we descended to 9,000 feet, spent the night, and finished the trek out to our awaiting vehicles the following day. During our time on the mountain, three climbers from other groups died while attempting the summit.

We then flew to Lamu, Kenya where the luxurious Peponi's hotel was the perfect R&R from Kilimanjaro. Our days were spent exploring old town Lamu, enjoying fresh seafood and local cuisine, snorkeling the gorgeous reefs, and soaking in the sun, beach, and eclectic culture.

Our next stop was Rusinga Island where we met up with Peter Gordon and participated in the distribution of hundreds of stuffed animals to the kids of Kolunga and helped deliver a round of goats too.

Then to the Mara where we were graced with the utmost luck seeing a 3,000 wildebeest crossing, multiple leopards, and were awed by a cheetah on the hood of the Land Rover.

It was a great trip, certainly the best one yet, and not one to soon forget. We have generated much interest in East Africa and our humanitarian work here in the States. More to come!