



High hopes: Chris Flack will trade the mountains of Wales for Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, below, this year.

Photo, below: Reuters

## Africa expedition aims for sum and summit

By TALIA SHADWELL

A CHRISTCHURCH man is proving that the Kiwi spirit of generosity can reach great heights from afar.

London-based Chris Flack plans an expedition to Mt Kilimanjaro on his 30th birthday this August to raise funds for the Red Cross Canterbury earthquake appeal.

Speaking from London, the self-described adventurer plans to raise £5895 – equivalent to £1 for every metre to the top of Kilimanjaro. That translates to about \$12,400 for the earthquake's victims.

Flack said he wanted to help, but a little cajoling reveals this latest stunt is not out of character. He first garnered media attention in 2006, when his new year's resolution to conquer two dares every week for a year was reported in the *Sunday Star-Times*.

He compared his "comfort zone challenge" with ticking off goals on a "life bucket-list".

Twice weekly he faced challenges ranging from milking a cow to skydiving, to streaking across Christchurch's Cathedral Square.

In 2006 Flack won the *Cleo* Bachelor of the Year title while "wrecking the family name" according to his dad.

But that was a long time ago, he says: "I don't want to be perceived as an idiot!"

The bid to climb Kilimanjaro came because he felt "helpless" in London and unsatisfied with simply donating money to charity.

"There are lots of ways of giving. To me, part of it is to get a group of likeminded people together who want to do something for the same reason: whether it's because they're from Christchurch or they've always wanted to go, it's something that people do once in a lifetime."

Flack laughs at questions about his climbing experience.

He's no mountaineer. The graphic designer spent almost

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nine years living in the Garden City before taking his career to London in 2007.

Flack shrugs off any praise for his venture. "Christchurch is in my heart," he says. And besides: "Loads of people do Kilimanjaro."

But "loads" of people have not launched a full-scale expedition to the mountain.

Mark Lincoln, 28, the Aranui-based editor of [nzraw.co.nz](http://nzraw.co.nz), called his old friend an "inspiration".

"As a Christchurch resident myself, I thank him from the bottom of my heart."

Flack hopes a party of 12 will

accompany him in his bid for Kilimanjaro's peak.

Three other expat adventurers have committed to the cause so far – two of them Kiwis. His website ([www.kilimanjaronz.com](http://www.kilimanjaronz.com)) displays a message of support from his hero, mountaineer Mark Inglis. Flack hoped others would show their support through sponsorship, or by joining him, saying: "You don't need to be superman or anything. [The hike] only needs a normal level of fitness. I've been saying to people, 'If you can walk to the bus stop, you can do it.'"

Flack plans to celebrate his 30th birthday on Kilimanjaro's summit on August 6 and is in talks with documentary makers to film the expedition.

Although his team's hike for humanity will be tinged with sorrow, Flack said he wouldn't hold back the celebrations once he reached the icy "roof of Africa". "I'm kinda keen to do the robot [dance] – but it will be the frozen robot!"

