

# Conquering Kilimanjaro



The 2001 Childaid expedition on the summit of Kilimanjaro.

## Defence Forces plan 11th climb of Kilimanjaro for Childaid

**T**he daunting mass of Kilimanjaro is the target of a sponsored climb by Childaid for the 11th time since the charity's inception in 1999. Over 200 members of the public and a number of Defence Forces personnel have scaled the highest mountain in Africa to raise money for the children of Africa and to generate awareness of their plight.

Childaid is a humanitarian organisation for the third world, formed by Irish Aid workers and Defence Forces personnel, who worked on street children's projects in Africa and continue to support these projects.

Childaid developed and evolved within the Defence Forces. "In every overseas mission Irish troops have ever served – from the Congo to Rwanda and even today in the likes of Liberia – they have carried out excellent humanitarian work," explains a spokesman for Childaid. "In the Lebanon the Irish troops helped to build orphanages

and feed and clothe the children, at their own expense. The Irish troops are well-known for their peacekeeping efforts, but their humanitarian work is less well-known."

Funds raised in the 2005 climbs will go to the street children's projects in the slums of Nairobi.

Childaid is pioneering an educational programme for the children of the slums of Nairobi in conjunction with Fr Pat O'Toole of the Holy Ghost Fathers and Sister Mary Kileen of the Mercy Sisters. Both do outstanding work in the slums to support the poorest children and Mary is known as 'the Mother Theresa of Africa'.

90% of the money for Childaid is raised through these climbs, which take place three times a year. The first climb was in 1999, and only military personnel took part. Today, however, civilians comprise the lion's share of the climbers, along with a number of military personnel.

It is hoped that the funds raised will help

complete three exciting projects in Mukuru slums' Twa Genda primary school, now renamed the John Lucey school. The first is the building of 17 basic classrooms. This school is probably the most deprived in the slum and caters for the poorest of the poor. Most families are unable to pay school fees at any level. As a consequence, conditions at the school are appalling and 'would be unfit for the accommodation of cattle in Europe', according to Childaid.

### Details of the 2005 climbs are as follows:

*Climb 1* – 28th February to 12th March

*Climb 2* – 29th May to 10th June

*Climb 3* – 7th August to 19th August

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