

# AWA Member Kirsten Pugh on the Climb and Run for Wilderness:

## Why? Why? And Why?

By Kirsten Pugh

### Why I Climb

When I first started participating in this event, I was motivated not only by the desire to fundraise for AWA, but also to challenge myself physically. One memorable year I climbed the tower five times – but typically I go up two or three times. I love the atmosphere, the camaraderie, and the sense of community that comes with being part of something greater than yourself.

What I will miss about being in the Calgary Tower is the art, the “Tallest Gallery in the West.” I loved seeing the new art added every year and – of course – being told what step I was on so I knew how many more were to go (Good news... there are factoids to read on each floor while climbing the Bow, and you’ll know what floor you’re on too!).

I love watching faces of people as they climb. Some are racing, seriously or for fun; some are chatting comfortably with friends old or new; but all have that light in their eyes telling you they are enjoying themselves. Seeing Richard Guy climbing at the age of 99 in the 2016 Climb was so inspiring, and the fact he carries a photo of Louise, his late wife, gives me a lump in my throat every year.

I will continue to climb for the next quarter century of this event. I will continue to stay active, to get out and enjoy the wilderness whenever possible, and to fundraise for AWA so that the wilderness will be there when I need to escape to it.

### Why My Kids Climb

Let’s be honest – my kids didn’t have a lot of choice when they started “climbing” for wil-

derness, since my husband David or I would carry them in a backpack. Now, however, at six and nine they delight in going up more times than me, and take even more delight in not letting me forget that they have gone up more times than I have! They fundraise, in lieu of birthday gifts, and I hope will grow up to love and appreciate the wilderness as much as David and I do.

They both attended the Wilderness Defenders Camp this past summer and absolutely loved it. The presentations they did at the end of the week about westslope cutthroat trout and owls were both adorable and heart-warming.

### Why My Company Climbs

I have been organizing the Cenovus Teams

for the Climb and Run for Wilderness for years now. I love getting people together to support fundraising for a very important cause or organization like AWA. It’s a great opportunity to meet colleagues you might not otherwise get to know and we always have a great time both on the Climb and in our training sessions. Last year we won the Team Spirit award! Working for Cenovus and having the company support employee fundraising with matching donations, support the team with T-shirts, and support AWA by sponsoring the 2017 Climb and Run for Wilderness makes me very proud.

I hope to see you inside the stairs of the beautiful Bow building on Earth Day 2017 challenging yourself and raising funds for AWA. ▲



*The Pugh family at the 2016 Climb and Run for Wilderness*