

# Meet the Coaches



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## Hike Chairman – Martin Miller

As an avid hiker, I appreciate the sense of achievement from completing a grueling climb. Facing the physical and mental challenges of a hike, while enjoying the gift of the great outdoors, is doubly rewarding.

And I plan to share these challenges and rewards with my daughter. Brynn was diagnosed at birth with cystic fibrosis. Now 3 years old, Brynn already displays a passion for the outdoors and a determination to tackle a host of activities. But she also faces the medical complications brought on by this chronic illness.

Xtreme Hike provides an opportunity to challenge yourself and raise money and awareness for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation's mission: to find a cure for CF.

## From Couch to Coach – Chris Hamm

Last year, the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation announced a new event called the Xtreme Hike. I had a friend from Charlotte talk to me about their hike earlier in the year, so I bet him that if he would do the hike, I'd do the DC hike. Little did I know how much impact that bet would have. My friend completed his hike, which meant I need to sign, get ready, and raise some money. I was 37 years old and carrying an extra 20 pounds. This seemed like a crazy idea. I remind myself that I know someone who spend at least 10 hours a week "training".

My nephew Jack and thousands others live with the disease. Jack's training includes taking at least 36 pills a day to help digest food, physical therapy sessions, air chamber treatments, and inhaled antibiotics through a nebulizer, all of which takes a total of AT LEAST 2 hours a day. Those treatments are just when they are healthy. When they are sick the treatments get longer and more painful. I will never say 30 miles seems easy but it certainly pales in comparison to living with a life threatening disease each and every day.

Since signing up, I walked or hiked approximately 400 miles in 2013. I had to remove my first tick, pushed myself through several 20 mile hikes, walked 10 miles on the beach, and raised \$5K for the 2013 event. I was spending at least 20 hours a week training, including riding or walking to and from Arlington to DC for work every day. Training for the hike led me to change my commute to work from metro to bicycling. Earlier this year, I completed a 200 mile bike ride for another charity. This event has truly changed my life.



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Today, I am down 25 pounds from when I started. I am in the best shape of my adult life, and have 4 friends committed to doing the 2014 hike with me.



## Experienced Extremist– Emily Suttle

Emily Suttle began participating in Xtreme Hike in 2013 to raise money for CFF on behalf of her cousin Joe, who lives with the illness in the UK. She is a long distance runner having completed over 30 endurance events in the last 5 years, including 2 Xtreme Hikes last year. Last year, Emily ran 300 miles and raised over \$3,000 for CFF. This year her goal is even higher, as she plans to run 500 miles and raise \$5,000 to make CF stand for Cure Found!

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## Transformed Hiker – Laura Starr

I work at the national office of the CF Foundation and when I heard the testimonials of two volunteers who had completed the Xtreme Hike at the Charlotte chapter, I signed up the very next day! What better way to explore the area I lived in and the trails and mountains nearby, get into shape and keep fit, complete this endurance feat AND raise money and awareness for cystic fibrosis. It's changed my life for the better!

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## Hiking for Morgan - Rob Samsot

My youngest daughter, Morgan, was born in 2012, and was diagnosed with CF just two short weeks later. While my wife and I initially felt so alone and so hopeless regarding the diagnosis, we quickly met our team of doctors, and soon thereafter got involved with the broader CF community through the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. While the medical care is of course paramount, the support that comes from the community seems nearly as important. And when I discovered I could pair my love for hiking with my new-found passion of furthering the efforts aimed at finding a cure for CF, I knew I would be an annual participant in the Xtreme Hike. So last September, I donned a headlamp and set out at 3:00 am in the Massanutten wilderness for 13 hours and 31 miles. Despite the aching muscles and blisters, it was an absolute blast, and I'm really looking forward to this year's program, where I'll continue to build on the friendships that started nearly a year ago.

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