



Mouskos has been raising money for children's charities

First Cypriot up Mont Blanc

FORTY-year-old John Michael Mouskos was yesterday the first Cypriot reported to have successfully climbed Mont Blanc in the Alps, Western Europe's highest mountain.

Mouskos of Lemithou village climbed Mont Blanc (16,100 feet) on August 31 this year. He arrived at the mountain's summit at 8am having left from Advanced Base Camp seven hours earlier, a press release said.

Mouskos is better known for his successful 600km walk across the Troodos Mountain range in May to raise awareness for the Breathing Life Trust.

The Breathing Life Trust charity was founded by Mouskos to raise money for the Breathing Life Lung Centre for children, a fully equipped, state-of-the-art respiratory research and treatment centre at Nicosia's Makarios hospital.

The charity has so far raised £55,000 as part of an

overall campaign target fund of £200,000, which the fund hopes to raise by next December. The Breathing Life Trust will make its first £25,000 donation to Cyprus in mid-December this year. The amount will be used for the purchase of equipment to monitor children's lung function for the Paediatric Departments of the District Hospitals of Limassol, Larnaca and Paphos and for the acquisition of an advanced technology digital system for the diagnosis of the rare Immotile Cilia Syndrome to be used by the Paediatric Respiratory Research Unit in Nicosia. The donation is part of the Trust's overall strategy to enhance healthcare for children across the island.

Respiratory diseases are responsible for most sickness and mortality in childhood, equalling the severity of cardiovascular diseases in adults.

Fifty-five per cent of Neo-

natal Intensive Care Unit admissions at Makarios hospital relate to severe respiratory difficulties and 28 per cent of Children's Intensive Care Unit admissions are for severe lung disease or complications, said Makarios hospital's paediatric pulmonologist Dr Panayiotis Yiallourous.

He added that asthma was the most frequent chronic disease in Cypriot children, to the extent that it appeared to be taking on epidemic proportions, affecting eight to 11 per cent of the total number of school age children in the Nicosia district and six per cent in Limassol. In addition, it appears that one out of every five pre-school age children report at least one or more episodes of bronchospasm and wheezing before the age of six, he said.

■ For more information visit www.breathinglife.co.uk