

# Mountain climb for a children's lung centre

By Sofia Kannas

A MOUNTAIN climbing expedition hopes to raise the Cyprus flag on the summit of one of the highest mountains in the southern hemisphere in the New Year.

The team – which includes Cypriots John Michael Mouskos and Kyriakos Onesiforou – will begin their attempt to reach the peak of Mount Aconcagua in Argentina early next year.

If the expedition succeeds, Mouskos and Onesiforou will be the first Greek Cypriots to reach a 7,000 metre high peak.

“It’s an extraordinary challenge but for us what’s important is to establish a benchmark in terms of mountaineering for Cyprus,” says Mouskos. “Hopefully this could lead to bigger and better things.”

“We’re taking lots of local delicacies with us like sausage and halloumi and we’ll be celebrating New Year’s Eve at base camp. Then we’ll start the climb in the New Year.”

This summer, Onesiforou reached an impressive 7,000m up Mount Everest – the world’s highest moun-

tain – while in October 40-year-old Mouskos became the first Cypriot to reach the peak of Western Europe’s highest mountain, Mont Blanc.

But with the average temperature on the summit of Aconcagua – known as the ‘Colossus of the Americas’ – at minus 30 Celsius, the climb looks set to be grueling.

The team, which also includes Costas Tzivelekas, Stratos Micahloriou and Panayiota Cristopanou, from Greece, hope to reach the summit of Mount Aconcagua between January 7 and 11 next year.

The expedition also aims to raise awareness of the work done by The Breathing Life Trust, founded by Mouskos, which is campaigning to establish a new children’s lung centre in Cyprus. Mouskos, from Lemithou village, completed a 600km walk across the Troodos Mountain range in May to increase awareness of the Trust, which aims to raise enough money for a fully equipped, state-of-the-art respiratory research and treatment centre at Nicosia’s Makarios hospital.