

Mike's Hike a Blind Hiker's Journey on the Appalachian Trail

About Mike

Michael O. Hanson, Esq.

Mike was born three months premature in 1965 and given pure oxygen. That destroyed the retinas of both his eyes, resulting in total blindness. On a clear day he can tell if the sun is shining. Other than that, he has no sight. Mike has a BA in psychology and an MA in speech-language pathology. After earning a law degree, he passed the bar exam on his first attempt and is licensed to practice in Minnesota.

In addition to practicing law, Mike co-founded a brewing supply business and worked in human resources for a fortune 500 company. That said he still faces a common problem for those with visual impairments, a staggering 70% under/unemployment rate.

In his spare time Mike is an avid outdoorsman. He enjoys hunting, fishing, canoeing, cross-country skiing & hiking. He has backpacked part of the Cascade Mountains, through parts of Shenandoah National park and in Colorado. In December 2008 he experienced the thrill of shooting a 900 pound 7-by-6 bull elk.

Mike's Hike will combine Mike's love of the outdoors and his strong desire to demonstrate how adaptive technology can increase the independence of persons with disabilities.

About the Hike and Documentary

In March 2010 Mike will start his 2,174 mile through-hike of the Appalachian Trail at Springer Mountain in Georgia. The goal is to reach the summit of Mt. Katahdin in Maine 6 to 8 months later.

While Mike will not be the first blind hiker to complete the trail, he will be the first to do so using only a white cane and GPS technology to navigate his way. Mike hopes to make a dramatic statement about the independence of individuals with visual impairments and how adaptive technology can greatly enhance that independence.

In addition to standard hiking and backpacking equipment, Mike will carry a Bluetooth GPS receiver and a Nokia N82 cell phone equipped with 2 GPS programs.

Mike has spent the last two years plotting and testing the coordinates of over 20,000 points along the trail. These landmarks include water sources, shelters, supply points and most importantly hazards that would be obvious to a sighted hiker.

Award winning videographer Gary L. Steffens of Fresh Images Video Productions will shoot a documentary of this epic event!!

How You Can Help

We will need money up front to purchase equipment and supplies and cover expenses.

The budget for Mike's Hike has been divided into 3 phases.

Phase 1: \$ 13,600 for Mike to take the Hike

Phase 2: \$35,400 to film the documentary

Phase 3: \$100,000 for editing and production costs

There can be no documentary for Gary to film if Mike doesn't take a hike: therefore funding the hike is the priority. No donated funds will be spent on the project until phase 1 funding is secured. Likewise money will not be spent on phase 2 until its full funding is secured. If sufficient funds are not raised we will gladly refund your donation per your indication on the Donor Form.

Capable Partners, Inc. has generously agreed to act as fiscal agent for Mike's Hike. This highly respected Twin Cities-based organization works diligently to make outdoor activities accessible to persons with disabilities. Donations made to Mike's Hike through Capable Partners, Inc. will be tax deductible.

We realize these are difficult economic times. Please consider contributing any amount you can to support Mike's Hike. Just think, if 500 people give \$100 or 50 people give \$1,000 each, we will have enough money for the first 2 phases!

Please complete the Mike's Hike Donation Form below. Please visit www.blindhiker.com for more information or to donate on-line.

Fiscal agency generously provided by Capable Partners, Inc. Please visit www.capablepartners.org for more information about this organization.

Mike's Hike Contact Information Form

Providing the information requested below is voluntary. However we cannot return your generous donation without this information.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State Zip _____

Donation amount _____

_____ I do not want my donation refunded if Mike's Hike does not occur.

_____ I would like all or part of my donation refunded if Mike's Hike does not occur. Please indicate percentage _____

_____ I would like my donation contributed to Capable Partners, Inc. if Mike's Hike does not occur.

_____ Please include me on the donors list on www.blindhiker.com.

Donor's Signature

Date

To make a tax-deductible donation, please make checks payable to Capable Partners, Inc. and send to:

Capable Partners, Inc.
C/O Violet Foster
Treasurer
30169 Helium St. NW
Cambridge, MN 55008.

Please indicate Mike's Hike in the memo line.

The only obstacle in Mike's path is funding. Help him disprove prevailing myths and open doors for persons with visual impairments. Make Mike take a hike!