

## **Three visually impaired persons to climb Mount Kinabalu**

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KOTA KINABALU: Three visually impaired persons will attempt to overcome the tough terrains and reach the peak of Mount Kinabalu to create more awareness of glaucoma.

Stevens Chan, Mohd Fidaus and Cheok Zein Yiin are taking part in the Climb For Sight project, a campaign started by the Malaysia Glaucoma Society and Save Ones Sight Missions Bhd; organizations formed and started by Stevens with a vision to fight and stop unnecessary blindness.

Stevens, 49, lost his sight at 45 after battling with glaucoma since he was 40; Mohd Fidaus, 23, still battling with glaucoma since birth and ZeinYiin, 26, lost her sight after battling with glaucoma since age 15.

Climb For Sight 2011 also aims to raise funds for 20 under privileged glaucoma patients to seek treatments that may perhaps save their remaining eye sights. It is the beginning of a series of events organized by both organizations to commemorate World Sight Day 2011.

The three blind climbers accompanied by seven volunteers, including a seven-year-old boy, will leave for Kota Kinabalu on October 9 and will start their ascent up Mount Kinabalu on the 10th and hope to reach the peak on the early hours of October 11.

On the team return on October 13, they will attend the first Malaysia Glaucoma Awareness Forum at Wisma MCA on October 15 and finally closes the 2011 World Sight Day events with a special charity eye health screening organized in collaboration with the Singapore Eye Research Institute and Singapore Advanced Imaging Laboratory for Ocular Research at the Fahrenheit 88 mall on October 16.

Glaucoma otherwise known as the silent thief of sight, is currently the world's leading cause of irreversible blindness affecting more than 70 million people worldwide, including an estimated 500,000 Malaysians in a report by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in 2009.

There are no apparent symptoms on the onset of glaucoma, in fact most patients were only aware that they are stricken with it when they have lost a substantial percentage of their visual field, some even as high as 40 per cent.

At this point of time there is yet to be any cure for the eye disease. Medical sciences to date can only offer damage control through the use of eye drops for a life time, laser treatments and surgeries. Some may even need a combination of these treatments to prevent any further vision loss.

Just like any other modern lifestyle diseases such as diabetes and high blood pressure, glaucoma patients need to manage their diseased condition well for a lifetime to prevent further vision loss. If it is managed and controlled well, patients need not suffer blindness.

For more information of these special events and also on how to support the blind climbers' missions to stop unnecessary blindness, please visit [www.glaucomal.org](http://www.glaucomal.org) or their facebook page at Climb For Sight Community or email to [info@glaucomal.org](mailto:info@glaucomal.org)