

# Mt. Everest next on McGrath's list; Sudbury native already climbed six of the world's seven highest summits

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As she nears her conquest of the world's Seven Summits, Meagan McGrath has become a hero and role model for all Sudburians and particularly young people, city council says.

"You are an inspiration to everybody in Sudbury, young and old," Ward 5 Coun. Ron Dupuis told McGrath during Wednesday night's council meeting.

"You are a role model for the kids at our school and for all the kids in the city," added Ward 1 Coun. Joe Cimino, a teacher at Algonquin Road Public School.

McGrath, 29, who attended Algonquin as a youngster, has become a big-time celebrity to the school's current crop of students.

The students are enthusiastically raising money to help McGrath as she prepares to scale the world's tallest peak, Mount Everest, Cimino said.

McGrath, who also attended Lo-Ellen Park Secondary School, now lives in Ottawa, where she is an aerospace engineer and a captain in the Canadian Armed Forces.

Her assault on Mount Everest, which begins in April, is the final stage of a goal to become only the seventh Canadian to scale the Seven Summits.

The Seven Summits are the highest mountains on each of the seven continents. Over the last five years, McGrath has scaled six of the seven peaks, leaving Asia's Everest, which rises 8,848 metres (29,029 feet) above sea level.

"It's going to be a great adventure and I'm looking forward to it each and every day," McGrath told city council.

She said she has been overwhelmed by the financial and moral support received from her hometown, adding the city will be a prominent part of her two-month Everest adventure.

"I cannot thank Sudbury enough for this opportunity," she said.

"I will have a City of Greater Sudbury flag with me and I will have a city logo on my chest."

Science North is a major supporter of the Everest expedition, which has become the focus of a new exhibit at the science centre. McGrath gave a public presentation at the centre Wednesday night and plans to do the same when she returns, likely in June.

The new exhibit at Science North will allow visitors, particularly school children, to track McGrath's daily progress as she endures the extreme challenges of scaling Everest.

"I will be relaying messages to Science North every day and sending back photos of what's happening," she said.

Despite her considerable accomplishments to date, McGrath emphasized she is not underestimating the challenges and the risks that come with an ascent of Everest.

"I'm training very hard and I'm going to be as prepared as I possibly can," she said. "I understand the risks, like the weather and avalanches, snow conditions. You have to be smart about it. But you can only mitigate those things so much. Luck can be a big factor."

McGrath estimates the total cost of the expedition at \$45,000, but said the pricetag could be higher by the time she reaches her goal. Donations can be made via the Internet, at [www.sciencenorth.ca/everest](http://www.sciencenorth.ca/everest).

City council passed a motion Wednesday officially recognizing McGrath's achievements and, on behalf of all citizens, wishing her the best in her ascent of Everest.

In addition to the city and Science North, sponsors of the expedition include the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation, CVRD Inco, Laamanen Group, Laprairie Inc., The Sudbury Star and CBC Radio One.

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## SCALING THE SEVEN SUMMITS

Sudbury's Meagan McGrath has scaled six of the world's Seven Summits - the highest mountains on each of the seven continents. This spring, McGrath will tackle the highest peak on the list - Mount Everest, which rises 8,848 metres (29,029 feet) above sea level. The summits are:

Mountain Feet Meters Location

Everest 29,029 8,848 Nepal/Tibet

Aconcagua 22,840 6,962 Argentina

Mount McKinley 20,320 6,195 Alaska

Kilimanjaro 19,339 5,963 Tanzania

Elbrus 18,481 5,633 Russia/Georgia

Vinson Massif 16,067 4,897 Antarctica

Carstensz Pyramid 16,023 4,884 Indonesia

Mount Kosciuszko 7,310 2,228 Australia

(Note: Both the Carstensz Pyramid and Mount Kosciuszko are included - and considered by many as interchangeable - in the official Seven Summit list, due to different interpretations of continental borders. Kosciuszko is the highest peak on the Australian mainland, while Carstensz is the highest Australian continental mountain. (McGrath has climbed Kosciuszko and hopes to scale Carstensz next year).