



## **WHAT IS FIRST DESCENTS?**

First Descents is a Vail-based non-profit organization committed to curing young adults of the emotional effects of cancer and empowering them to regain control of their lives by experiencing whitewater kayaking and other challenging adventure sports in a safe, fun and supportive environment.

- Founded in Vail in 2001 by professional kayaker Brad Ludden, First Descents started with a single camp with 14 campers.
- Since 2001, First Descents has utilized whitewater kayaking and other outdoor adventure sports to promote emotional, psychological, and physical healing for over 600 young adults with cancer.
- In 2009 First Descents hosted nine weeklong programs in six different states, *Wisconsin, Montana, Washington, Colorado, Idaho, Wyoming*, adding up to the organization's most successful year.

## **HOW IT WORKS**

- During the weeklong First Descents experience, campers ages 18 to 39 are empowered through kayaking, team building and other outdoor sports and activities to push their limits and face the challenges associated with living with cancer. When not on the river or climbing, campers are able to relax, hike, play volleyball, listen to music and get to know each other.
- First Descents places an emphasis on daily goal setting, confidence building and teamwork exercises. Campers are encouraged to challenge themselves, but won't be pushed past their capabilities.
- Each program is limited to 15 participants, ensuring individualized care, medical attention and an intimate experience with fellow First Descents participants.
- First Descents programs are available to young adults with cancer regardless of their financial means. All meals, accommodations and program activities are provided to participants free of charge.

## **THE FIRST DESCENTS EXPERIENCE**

- The First Descents experience builds the perception that young adults with cancer can lead productive and vigorous lives.
- First Descents aims to inspire others to dedicate time and money to helping young adults with cancer and to lessen the negative impact of cancer on society.

## **THE FIRST DESCENTS VISION**

- The demand for First Descents continues to grow throughout the country among the young adult cancer population, which is the most underserved demographic of cancer patients.
- In order to grow with this demand, First Descents aims to become the leader in outdoor adventure therapy among the young adult cancer population.