

## Something To Prove

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Dave Ashley on top of Mount Aconcagua, second highest challenge. Ashley lives in Arlington, his “basecamp” for both his kidney donation recovery in 2017 and now his 7 Summit campaign. Up soon: Mount Everest.



## Special Collaboration for Women's History

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PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

# Arlington Man Who Donated Kidney Will Climb 7 Summits

Casual Adventure and Dave “Dash” Ashley team up for historic Mount Everest attempt; 5 done; 2 to go.

BY EDEN BROWN  
THE CONNECTION

**D**ave Ashley, of Arlington, was visiting his West Point class Facebook page when he learned one of his classmates needed a kidney, badly. The classmate who needed the kidney was too shy to ask his classmates if they could help, so the group did it for him. That's how Dave Ashley decided to get tested to see if he'd be a match. It was unlikely.

But a few weeks later, Ashley found out he might indeed be a match and needed further tests to confirm. As he waited for the results of those tests, he researched what impact donating a kidney would have on his active lifestyle. It was a real concern for him and his family.

“One of the hardest things was that I couldn't find information on athletic ability afterwards.” And he tells the story of how he found the answer to that question.

“In 2016, I worked at the Pentagon, and when my classmate needed a kidney, I answered the call. But I like to do extreme (sports) stuff. REALLY. Most people I asked about being a living donor believed there would be limitations on my extreme ambitions. Unable to find counter examples of other living donor athletes, I forged ahead despite the unknown risk.”

The surgery took place in Boston in 2017. Ashley said, “Five years later, the recipient of the kidney and I are healthy and well. REALLY healthy and well. Making that donation has changed the direction of my life: I am now retired and pursuing my passion for extreme outdoor adventures and volunteer work full-time.”

Ashley said his fitness was far from impaired by his kidney donation. He won a National Championship in a race where participants paddle, mountain bike, and trek with a coed team; bike-packed 2,500 miles on the Great Divide trail; and now climbs mountains around the world. Just in case that was not enough evidence that one kidney can do it all, Ashley decided he would succeed in a set of extreme physical challenges, recognized around the world as elite. “Thus was born the vision of becoming the first living kidney donor to climb the Seven Summits.”

The “Seven Summits” are the highest peaks in each of the seven continents. They are Denali (North



Dave Ashley, who donated a kidney to a former classmate in 2017, is striving to be the first living kidney donor to climb the Seven Summits. He has completed five; two to go. See [www.adventurekidney.com](http://www.adventurekidney.com)

America), Elbrus (Europe), Kilimanjaro (Africa), Vinson (Antarctica), Aconcagua (South America), Carstensz Pyramid (Oceania), and Everest (Asia.)

How did he train? “I just trained by doing,” he said. “I’ve done five of the seven.” Ashley has just learned he will have to change to a different summit, Mount Kozciuszko, in Australia, because of pandemic quarantine rules in Indonesia.

When not climbing, he works with organizations that are involved in kidney donation and has received some support from the National Kidney Registry which hopes more living donors will come forward to help when they see how successful Ashley has been in leading an active life. “There are so many positives that came out of this,” he says. “Saving the life of a classmate was just the beginning.”

#### Living Donors

Living-donor transplantation offers an alternative to waiting for a deceased-donor organ to become available, a wait that can last for 3-5 years. Hospitals around the country are seeing that living-donor organ transplants are associated with fewer complications

than deceased-donor transplants. Organs from living donors experience fewer episodes of rejection and organs from living donors typically last longer than organs from deceased donors.

More than one Virginian has promoted being a living donor. Kat Velkoff of Chantilly is an ambassador for the American Kidney Fund and a living donor. She supports legislation currently being discussed in the Virginia General Assembly that would prohibit life, disability, and long-term insurance companies from denying others insurance or charging higher rates solely based on their organ donor status. Sen. Adam Ebbin, D-Alexandria, introduced Senate Bill 271, and Del. Karrie K. Delaney, D-Centerville, introduced House Bill 421. SB 271 is the more generous of the bills because it includes provisions for unpaid leave and reinstatement of the employee into their old job. It “prohibits any person from refusing to insure, refusing to continue to insure, or limiting the amount or extent of life insurance, disability insurance, or long-term care insurance coverage available to an individual or to charge an individual a different rate for the same cover-

age based solely and without any additional actuarial risks upon the status of such individual as a living organ donor.”

To learn more about Ashley's adventure, see: [www.adventurekidney.com](http://www.adventurekidney.com)

To learn more about becoming a living donor, see: <https://www.kidney.org/transplantation/beadonor>

#### Casual Adventure Supports Ashley's Quest

When Casual Adventure Outfitters in Arlington says, “We Can Outfit YOU From Great Falls to Nepal,” it's not just an advertising slogan. Casual Adventure and internationally recognized manufacturer Mountain Hardwear have teamed up yet again for another historic expedition attempt. This outdoor adventure partnership has combined efforts to sponsor local endurance athlete Dave “Dash” Ashley (aka Adventure Kidney) the world's first living kidney donor to attempt to climb the Seven Summits, including Mount Everest, within one year.

Over 20 years ago, Casual Adventure Outfitters and Mountain Hardwear came together to support the Everest dream of another local

climber, Saeed Toosi, who became the world's first Iranian-American to solo ascend Everest.

More recently, Casual Adventure Outfitters supported Andrew Towne in his completion of the Seven Summits, including the unsuccessful attempt in 2015 due to the Gorkha Earthquake, and his subsequent summit in 2017.

Eric Stern, owner of Casual Adventure, said this week, “We are so proud to be part of another amazing adventure to Mount Everest along with Mountain Hardwear. “Dash” climbs for all the right reasons: a sense of responsibility and respect for Mother Nature and his fellow man. Especially considering everything that has happened in the world over the past few years, Dave's story is one of hope, compassion, and inspiration.”

Casual Adventure is located in the Virginia Square neighborhood of Arlington, family owned and operated since 1955. Originally founded as a small grocery store by Oscar Stern in 1945, Casual Adventure has grown into one of the leading sporting goods shops in the Washington Metro area. From 1955 until 1985 Casual Adventure was known as The Surplus Center

[www.ConnectionNewspapers.com](http://www.ConnectionNewspapers.com)

with its shelves stocked with military fatigues, field jackets, canteens, and other GI merchandise. As the marketplace changed the company reinvented itself, changing its name from Surplus Center to Casual Adventure in 1985. Now in the hands of the fourth generation, Casual Adventure continues to build on its strong retail tradition of customer service, premier outdoor brands and a unique merchandise mix few stores its size can duplicate. It also has a tradition of community involvement and sponsorship, from athletic events to charity fundraisers.

Casual Adventure, 3451 Washington Blvd, Arlington, VA 22201; 703-527-0600; <https://casualadventure.com/>

#### ON THE WEB

Mentions of Ashley on line: <https://www.livingdonorgames.org/donor-athlete-profile-dave-ashley/> <https://www.runwashington.com/2020/10/05/ashley-kidney/> <https://www.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/1365494/organ-donation-bolsters-bond-between-classmates/> <https://kidneydonorathlete.org/2019/10/16/dave/>

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Dave Ashley on top of one of his 7 summits, the second highest challenge: Mount Aconcagua. Ashley lives in Arlington, his “basecamp” for both his donation recovery in 2017 and now his 7 Summit campaign.



Dave Ashley and Eric Stern with his climbing suit in front of Casual Adventure. “This is the go-to place for folks in this area when you are ready to go on a big expedition. Thanks to Eric and the folks at Casual Adventure and Mountain Hardwear for hooking me up with this down suit. Anything you need for these kinds of expeditions, or hiking, camping, scouts, military, you can find it at Casual Adventure,” said Ashley.



Dave Ashley on top of Mount Vinson, Antarctica.



PHOTOS BY KURT MOSER

The dead fish ranged in size from small to large.

# Fishy Story: Thousands of Fish Die In Four Mile Run, Cause Unknown

Conservation-ists interested in information on the origin of the incident.

BY EDEN BROWN  
THE CONNECTION

An Alexandria runner, Bridget Tomich, was on her six a.m. run along Four Mile Run on Friday, May 13th, when she looked down and saw thousands of dead fish. “They were dotted across the run the entire length between Mt. Vernon and the airport.”

The investigation of the fish kill incident in Four Mile Run on May 13th remains ongoing according to Aileen Winqvist, Arlington County’s environmental management specialist. Winqvist said, “Staff were onsite on that Friday (when it was discovered), over that weekend, and on Monday, and met with staff from VA DEQ (Department of Environmental Quality) as well. There were no obvious visual discharges or contaminants in the area. Live fish, turtles and birds were observed during these site visits. DEQ collected water samples and fish samples, but we have not received the results of the sample analysis yet. We are also checking with staff at the Water



Dead fish along the Four Mile Run on Friday.

Pollution Control Plant and other potential sources in the area. The size of Four Mile Run in this area and the tidal nature of the flows could make it more challenging to identify a contaminant. Identifying causes of illicit discharges is often a challenge in urban environments, given the complexity of the storm drain networks, however it does not reflect a lack of concern

or effort to identify the cause.”

Kurt Moser at the Four Mile Run Conservatory Foundation said, “Whatever pollutant caused the sudden die-off has either dissipated or washed out with the tide. If you noticed anything unusual, or if you can help pinpoint the timing of the incident, please contact us.” For more information, see: <https://www.fourmilerun.org>

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# The Arlington Connection

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The firefighters arrive for a Home Safety Check. Having the truck there made other neighbors think about their own fire safety measures.

# FIRE SAFETY

PHOTOS BY EDEN BROWN/THE CONNECTION



The firefighters arrive for a Home Safety Check. Having the truck there made other neighbors think about their own fire safety measures.



L-R, Firefighter/Paramedic Jody Marker, Lieutenant Nicolas Calderon, Firefighter Jason Sandridge, Probationary Firefighter Kevin Della Pucca pose with Juno the poodle after their inspection.

## Glad I Flunked My Home Safety Check?

### Arlington County Fire Department does free safety check.

BY EDEN BROWN  
THE CONNECTION

The neighbors were on full alert when the fire engine pulled up outside my home at 11 am on Sunday morning. It was the on-duty crew at Station Eight coming to do a free safety check on my home. At the Arlington County Fair someone said the Arlington County Fire Department (ACFD) will check your smoke detectors and install new ones if you need them, as a public service. I didn't believe it would be so easy, but it was, and I'm glad I called: my house flunked the safety check.

The four firefighter/paramedics went through the house, commenting as they went: smoke detector that goes off every time my son-in-law takes a shower? Try putting it on a wall instead of the ceiling. Never put it in the corner of the ceiling. The one that never goes off, even when the steak is broiling and it should be wailing? It was out of date by about a decade. In fact, most of my smoke alarms had outlived their lifespan and because of age or dust, might not have worked if I had had a fire in my house. Several had been removed by my kids because they were annoying (that steady chirping that tells you the battery is low.) Those detectors wouldn't have saved anyone's life.

"We started the safety check program a while back when there were people who died in a fire because their smoke detectors weren't working," said Paramedic/Firefight-



The team goes through each room, looking for smoke detectors or the absence thereof.

er Jody Marker, who has been in the ACFD for 27 years. "It was tragic because working smoke detectors would have saved those lives." Lt. Nicolas Calderone said it's a good idea to get the newer ones anyway, because they come with a lithium battery that lasts ten years, so no more annoying beeps.

Where should they go in the house? "Definitely there should be one on every floor," Probationary Firefighter Kevin Della Pucca said. "I personally put one in every bedroom in my house." That's the view of a man who fights fires and has kids. And it's also the view of the official flier put out by the ACFD.

### Most Common Cause of Fires in Arlington:

Overloaded plugs with multiple devices plugged into one outlet or extension cord

Space heaters

Kitchen fires

This time of year: Christmas trees

The team also recommended fire extinguishers, small ones, for the kitchen, the car, and the garage. "A guy was working on his car and it sparked a fire on him," said Firefighter Sandridge. "His wife was able to save his life by spraying him with a fire extinguisher."

CO2 detectors also now come in plug-in versions which alleviate the burden of changing batteries. Della Pucca recommended two per household, one located near the furnace is good, and one elsewhere in the house where the air gets dispersed. "CO2 won't kill you fast the way smoke will, but it's dangerous because you can't smell it."

What are the most common causes of fires in Arlington? "Overloaded plugs with multiple devices plugged into one outlet or extension cord, space heaters, and kitchen fires," said Calderone. "And of course, this time of year, Christmas trees."

The team was friendly and non-judgmental about the expired smoke detectors. They suggested getting the highest quality device you can buy, and because of their inspection, seven new smoke detectors and three small fire extinguishers are now in place for the holidays.

Thanks, ACFD, for keeping us safe, and Happy Holidays!

## Home Fire Safety Check

### Cooking

The cooking area, including on top of the stove and in the oven, is free from all items that can burn.

Pots on the stove are not left unattended while cooking, remember "Keep an Eye on What You Fry."

The oven is never used to heat the home. Cooking vents are cleaned per manufacturer's directions.

Charcoal and gas grills are only used outdoors and at least 15 feet from the home, deck or garage.

### Smoking

House rules include not smoking in bed or while lying down.

Ashtrays are large, deep and kept away from any items that can burn.

### Heating

Baseboard heaters do not touch any furniture, curtains or other items stored on the floor.

Chimneys and heating systems are inspected, cleaned and repaired annually prior to the heating season.

The area around the furnace is clear of all items that can burn.

All portable heaters are placed at least three feet from furniture, walls or bedding.

Portable heaters are plugged directly into wall outlets and turned off when you leave the room.

Every fireplace is equipped with a sturdy metal screen.

### Electrical & Appliances

Extension cords are not used as permanent wiring.

Extension cords used are not tacked to walls, run under rugs, or through doorways. Safety covers are present on all outlets if small children are present.

Appliances are plugged directly into wall outlets.

Clothes dryer lint filter and venting system are clean.

### Housekeeping

Matches and lighters are kept out of reach of children in a secure place.

Paint, varnish and other flammable are stored in sturdy metal containers and in a cool place.

Ashes from fireplaces and barbecues are only disposed of in metal containers.

Candles are placed in sturdy holders away from children, pets or things that can burn.

Candles are extinguished before leaving the room or going to bed.

### Smoke Alarms & Carbon Monoxide Alarms

Smoke alarms are installed on every level of the home and in every bedroom.

Smoke alarms are tested monthly and vacuumed regularly.

Carbon monoxide alarms are located on every level of the home.

Alarm batteries are changed twice a year, unless equipped with a 10-year lithium battery. All alarms are less than 10 years old.

### Escape Plan

You have a plan of escape showing two ways out of every room and an outside family meeting place.

You regularly practice your escape plan by having fire drills with everyone in your home.

Your house numbers are clearly visible from the street.

Fire extinguishers are rated at least 2A:10B:C and only considered for use by adults on small fires after calling 9-1-1.