February 3, 2012

Endowment Gift to Support CFI’s Adopt-a-Peak Internship
Renamed in Memory of Fourteener Enthusiast Kimberly Appelson

(Golden, Colo.) A $50,000 gift from Larry and Barbara Appelson of Naperville, Ill. will seed an endowment designed to support Colorado Fourteeners Initiative’s summer internship for aspiring natural resource protection professionals. In recognition of this generous gift, the internship has been renamed the Kimberly Appelson Memorial Outdoor Leadership Internship in memory of the Appelson’s daughter, a Fourteener hiker who died in a 2010 rafting accident on the Arkansas River near Buena Vista, Colo.

“We are humbled by the generous spirit of the Appelson family’s gift,” said CFI Executive Director Lloyd Athearn. “They found a way to honor their daughter’s memory, protect the mountains she loved, and offer young professionals a start in the field of natural resource protection that she embarked upon before her life was tragically cut short.”

The four-month Kimberly Appelson Memorial Outdoor Leadership Internship works annually as part of CFI’s “Adopt-a-Peak” crew running volunteer-oriented trail maintenance and vegetation restoration projects on heavily used 14,000-foot peaks across the state. Internship participants typically are college students or recent graduates who learn trail building, alpine vegetation restoration, and volunteer management skills while leading more than 30 volunteer projects over the course of a summer season.

The internship is named after Kimberly Appelson who was born and raised in the suburban Chicago area but vacationed frequently as a child throughout the western United States and Canada on family hiking and skiing trips. Following graduation from the University of Iowa in May 2009, the lure of the western mountains drew Kimberly back to spend six months repairing and maintaining Forest Service trails in central Montana as part of a Montana Conservation Corps crew. Later that year Kimberly moved to Breckenridge to wait tables and improve her skiing in hopes of becoming a ski patroller. When the snow melted, she worked as a whitewater rafting guide on the Arkansas River, spending her free time climbing the nearby Sawatch Range Fourteener peaks. She aspired to one day summit all the 54 Colorado Fourteeners. However, on July 11, 2010, Kimberly perished in a rafting accident near Frog Rock while rafting the Arkansas River with friends. She was 23.

“We hope Kimberly’s life, adventurous spirit, and passion for protecting the mountains will live on in the many people who are touched by this internship over the years to come,” said her father, Larry Appelson. “Though the pay was low and the work hard, Kimberly loved living in the mountains and making a difference protecting the forests and trails. We hope this internship inspires other similarly inclined young people to pursue careers taking care of the mountains and forests that brought so much joy to Kimberly’s life.”

People interested in contributing to the endowment can send a check to CFI’s offices (607 10th St, Suite 107N, Golden CO 80401) or can donate online at: http://bit.ly/y8Xtoo. Please write “Appelson Endowment” on the check or in the notes field of the online transaction.