WHO: Maggie Schneider was only 35 years old when she was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis nine years ago. An academic advisory in the School of Arts & Science at the University of Pittsburgh, Schneider woke up one morning with blind spots over her eyes and immediately called her ophthalmologist. It was only after she suggested Schneider get an MRI that she was diagnosed with MS, a potentially debilitating disease of the central nervous system.

Although Schneider’s eye disability has since healed, she continues to experience a constant numbness in her right leg as a result of subsequent MS episodes. But even that won’t stop her from pursuing a dream of climbing 17,500 feet to the base camp of the world’s highest mountain – Mt. Everest.

Despite being diagnosed with a disabling disease such as MS, Schneider has designed a challenging training regimen to adequately prepare herself for the month-long journey. Her routine includes lifting weights three times per week, swimming twenty laps twice per week, and walking the steps of the cathedral on the campus of the University of Pittsburgh twice per week.

WHAT: Schneider is available to be interviewed in person or via telephone, to discuss her inspiring story of triumph over MS. Though her journey to Mt. Everest will not take place until May of 2004, journalists are encouraged to follow Schneider’s training process leading up to her departure.

MEDIA CONTACT: Brooke Saltzer
bsaltzer@spectrumscience.com
(202) 955-6222

Multiple sclerosis is a chronic, often disabling disease of the central nervous system that affects more than 400,000 people in the U.S. alone (Source: National MS Society). Most people with MS are diagnosed between the ages of 20 and 50, but the unpredictable physical and emotional effects can last a lifetime.