Women of the CMC: Florencia Szigeti

March is International Women’s History Month. The CMC is celebrating all month long with women’s specific programs, outings, and events. We’re also highlighting some of the leading women of the Club who help inspire and motivate us all. Learn more at [www.cmc.org/Calendar/WomensMonth2019.aspx](http://www.cmc.org/Calendar/WomensMonth2019.aspx).

Hailing from Mendoza, Argentina—a small town nestled at the foot of the Andes, Florencia Szigeti is no stranger to thin air and high peaks. Her father, an avid hiker, took the initiative to sign Florencia and her brother up for “Club Andinista,” Mendoza’s version of the Colorado Mountain Club and sent them on regular youth programs. Florencia recalls an early mountain memory from one of these trips, in which sliding down a rock flow left her with a pair of ripped pants: “I remember being very embarrassed, but having lots of fun...I was hooked!”

Florencia left Argentina to compete as a swimmer at Arizona State University in Phoenix, Arizona. Her swimming career didn’t leave much time for exploring in the outdoors, but opened Florencia’s world view and love for competition, as she would represent Argentina at the 2000 and 2004 Olympic Games. After she retired from swimming, Florencia moved to Colorado and found the Colorado Mountain Club. She was returned to that childhood love of exploration in the backcountry, and was thrilled to have the Rockies as her new playground.

After working her way through the CMC’s educational and safety programming, Florencia felt confident to return home in 2018 to attempt an ascent of Argentina’s crowning jewel: Aconcagua. One of the Seven Summits, Aconcagua peak sits at 22,837 feet of lung-burning elevation. Florencia described the experience as simply, but unquestionably: “Life-changing.”

Florencia Szigeti is an undeniable badass. From a ripped pair of pants as a seven-year-old, to competing at the Olympic Games, to standing atop one of Earth’s tallest peaks–she’s set and tackled goal after goal. For her, being a badass is about the pursuit and self-improvement that accompanies achieving a goal: “Understanding your weaknesses and working, training, learning what is needed to overcome those weaknesses and accomplish that goal, makes you a badass,” Florencia said.

She’s grateful for her fellow CMC members, who inspire and encourage her to reach for new heights: “[The CMC] changes the life of anyone who joins it by helping people adventure, by fostering friendships and allowing us to go and see places that otherwise we will never be able to see. I am very thankful for organizations of this kind, and I give cheers for the CMC to continue influencing lives for many, many years!” While Florencia has been inspired by the CMC and our members, we’ve been pretty inspired by her too. We can’t wait to see what goals she’ll be working towards next.