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EMBARGOED UNTIL MAY 10, 2011 at 11:00AM

Minnesota's Longest ALS Bike Ride to Support Two Charities Serving those Living with Lou Gehrig's Disease

Charity Event to Provide Support for Patient Services and Medical Research

WOODBURY, Minn. – *May 10, 2011* – On Saturday, May 21st, 2011, some 500 bicyclists from all over Minnesota, and surrounding states, will descend on Marine on St. Croix, Minn., for the second annual "ALS Bike Trek MN". The family-oriented fundraising event offers several different cycling routes, a BBQ lunch and live music as part of the state's longest ALS bike ride. All proceeds from this team-driven event will support 501c3 nonprofits working on behalf of those living with ALS.

"When we started this ride last year, we didn't know what to expect. But we went ahead with it and were more successful than we thought we would be; raising more than \$30,000 for research in the process," said the ride's organizer, Justin Rumley of Woodbury. Rumley's father, Steve, lost his battle with ALS on November 12, 2009. "I knew I had to do it for PALS [persons with ALS] so that they could feel the outpouring of support that the community will bring. May is National ALS Awareness Month and this event provides us here in Minnesota the chance to get out and do something in support of each other and against ALS," said Rumley.



This year's Honorary Chairman is Michael Winston, a 26 year-old ALS patient living in Mendota Heights, Minn. Winston's family and friends have gotten behind him and have risen over \$300,000 for ALS research. Michael has also been a visible and vocal advocate for ALS patients both as an Ambassador of the Young Faces of ALS Campaign as well as throwing out the first pitch at the Minnesota Twins' 4♦ALS Awareness day in 2010. The 4♦ALS Awareness campaign is an annual, league-wide effort to raise awareness of ALS in partnership with Major League Baseball. Last year's honorary chairperson, Bob Stimson, also an ALS patient, passed away in early 2011 from complications of the progressive neurodegenerative disorder. Stimson was instrumental in helping the event get off the ground.

"The ALS Bike Trek is an amazing event that combines the efforts of ALS TDI and the MDA – two leaders in the fight against ALS!" said Augie Nieto, an ALS patient, chairman of the board at ALS TDI, and co-chair of the MDA ALS Division along with his spouse, Lynne. "100% of the net proceeds from this event will fund cutting-edge ALS therapy research. As the founder of Life Fitness, I'm proud to put my name on an event that incorporates fitness into fundraising." This year, the MDA submitted proclamation requests to the legislature of the State of Minnesota, as well as the City of Minneapolis to recognize May as "ALS Awareness Month". Both requests were approved.

The ALS Bike Trek MN kicks off at 9:00 A.M. and will feature three distinct routes of varying distances to appeal to all bicycle skill levels. The routes are available online at www.alsbiketrekmn.com and all start and end at Big Marine Park Reserve in Marie on St. Croix. At noon, Madd Joe's BBQ is sponsoring a lunch, and live music featuring "The Melville's" will begin later in the afternoon. The BBQ is \$10 and registration for the bike trek ranges from \$40-\$70.

Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS, Lou Gehrig's disease), is a progressive neurodegenerative disease that results in paralysis. Currently, there is no known cure for ALS. Proceeds from this event will be split between the ALS Therapy Development Institute, Augie's Quest and the Minnesota Chapter of the MDA, which provides services to local ALS patients.

About ALS Therapy Development Institute (ALS TDI)

The mission of the ALS Therapy Development Institute (ALS TDI) is to develop effective therapeutics that slow or stop amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS, Lou Gehrig's disease), as soon as possible. Founded by the family of an ALS patient in 1999 as the world's first "nonprofit biotech", ALS TDI is now internationally recognized as a leading medical research institution. Its unique industrial-scale platform actively develops and tests dozens of potential therapeutics each year. The Cambridge, Massachusetts, based research Institute collaborates worldwide with academia and industry to bridge the translational research gap which exists among many orphan diseases, such as ALS. For more information about the Institute's current research pipeline and to take a virtual lab tour, please visit us online at www.als.net

About Augie's Quest

Fitness pioneer Augie Nieto started *Augie's Quest* (www.augiesquest.org) in conjunction with MDA's ALS Division. Nieto is co-founder and former president of Life Fitness of Chicago, and chairman of Octane Fitness. He and his wife, Lynne, serve as co-chairpersons of MDA's ALS Division. Nieto received a diagnosis of ALS in March 2005, and *Augie's Quest* raises money primarily through a variety of special events, including: "BASH for MDA Augie's Quest"; "Tradition of Hope" in Los Angeles; "Field of Hope Gala" in New Jersey; "Secure A Cure Golf Classic" in Purchase, N.Y.; "Big Canyon Golf" in Newport Beach, Calif.; The ClubCorp Charity Classic at golf clubs nationwide; plus "Clubs for A Cure" special visitation benefits for *Augie's Quest* at La Fitness and Bally Total Fitness locations across the country, as well as at scores of other independent and regional health clubs.

About MDA

MDA (www.mda.org) is the world's largest nonprofit provider of ALS services and funder of ALS research. The Association's unparalleled health care services, research, advocacy and education programs provide help and hope to more than 1 million Americans affected by ALS and 42 other neuromuscular diseases. Nationwide, MDA maintains a network of some 200 hospital-affiliated clinics (38 of which are designated as MDA/ALS Centers), and orchestrates hundreds of support groups to help families living with progressive muscle diseases. Learn more about the organization leading the fight against ALS by visiting als-mda.org or by calling 800-FIGHT-MD.

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