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4,000 Women Attempt New World Record at 2008 Lady of America/Ladies Workout Express Ab Crunch Challenge

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla., March 28, 2008 /PRNewswire via COMTEX/ -- Four thousand women across the country will "feel the burn" as they crunch their abs for one hour straight during the Ab Crunch Challenge taking place tomorrow (Saturday), March 29. More than 200 local Lady of America, Ladies Workout Express and Workout Express gyms will host the fitness challenge, with a goal to raise \$1 million for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and make history by creating a new Guinness Record for the most abdominal crunches done in one hour by a group.

"When I first heard about the challenge it sounded like the perfect way to get fit while helping a great cause. But crunching for an hour straight seemed out of my reach," said Roberta Hirsch, member at Lady of America in West Hempstead, NY.

Knowing that Roberta would not be alone in her thinking, earlier this year, Lady of America, the world's largest chain of full-service women's fitness centers, began promoting the life-saving work of St. Jude and challenged women to choose a weight loss program that benefited their waistline and helped others in need. They invited both members and non-members to sign-up for free ab training classes in local Lady of America gyms and asked the "crunchers" to solicit donations for St. Jude. Thousands of women enrolled and have trained for the past 10 weeks to build up the strength and endurance to perform hundreds of crunches on Challenge day.

"With the help of fellow crunchettes in my local ab training class I am now able to crunch for more than 60 minutes straight and am excited to show how far I've come -- and how much I've raised for the children of St. Jude -- on crunch day," added Hirsch.

Tomorrow morning the crunchettes' training will be put to the test as they crunch for one hour in hopes of raising \$1 million and achieving a new world record.

Founded by Hamilton Township, New Jersey Ladies Workout Express club owner Tony Parziale -- a two-time Guinness Book of World Records holder for performing more than 4,000 crunches within a one hour time limit -- the Ab Crunch Challenge began as a small event in honor of a gym member who lost a child to cancer. Three years later, Parziale now nicknamed "Captain Crunch," has turned his ab crunching challenge into a national philanthropic competition with thousands of women and 200 Lady of America franchised gyms participating.

"I'm extremely proud to lead this national philanthropic fitness campaign," said Parziale. "The women participating in this challenge have worked hard to build up their core strength and fundraise for St. Jude and should be applauded for the collective number of crunches they perform, and money donated, at tomorrow's challenge."

"St. Jude is an incredible research center where doctors and researchers are committed to saving the lives of children with cancer and other deadly diseases," says Beth Lucas of Malibu, Calif. whose son is a St. Jude patient. "Ab Crunch Challenge participants are part of a vital team supporting the hospital's life-saving work and ensuring that no child is ever turned away because of a family's inability to pay."

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For information about local Lady of America locations participating in the Ab Crunch Challenge, or to make a donation, visit www.abcrunchchallenge.org.

Participants in the national Lady of America/Ladies Workout Express Ab Crunch Challenge sweat it out during an abdominal training class. On Saturday, March 29, the crunchers' training will be put to the test as they crunch for one hour straight in hopes of raising \$1 million for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and achieving a new world record. (PRNewsFoto/Lady of America)

