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## Workout Express hosts fundraiser for St. Jude's

By **CRYSTAL LEE**

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This Saturday, Workout Express members and other participants in Woodland will sweat it out, doing as many abdominal crunches as possible in one hour, to meet three goals: raising \$1 million for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, while also building their personal endurance and creating a world record.

The local gym is one of 200 nationwide that have committed to the event, which originated three years ago in New Jersey, when Ladies Workout Express owner Tony Parziale twice made the Guinness Book of World Records by doing more than 4,000 crunches in an hour, according to Jeanine Karp, spokeswoman for the fitness club.

Known as "Captain Crunch," Parziale decided to organize a crunch challenge in his gym to raise money for a member who lost a child to cancer, Karp said.

Woodland's Workout Express, under the Ladies Workout Express and Lady of America corporation, will take part in the first nationwide organization of the Ab Crunch Challenge.

Workout Express co-owner Jerry Miller said his gym started offering free ab classes in January to train people for the marathon crunch session.

Gradually, participants were able to do more crunches for longer periods of time with each training, Miller said. Some of those trainees can now do thousands of crunches in one hour, he said, including two men over 60 years old, who can do more than 2,000 crunches each, and gym co-owner Kris Nordstrom, who was up to more than 3,700 crunches last week.

The event will be documented and sent to the Guinness Book of World Records to request the creation of a new category for the "most abdominal crunches to be done in one hour by a group."

Miller said he is excited about the event, although he will not be able to exert himself physically due to a heart condition. Instead, he will emcee the fundraiser, which is open to everyone to watch or participate in, regardless of whether they have a gym membership.

"I'm disappointed that I'm not able to crunch but, on the other hand, it's really something that's worthwhile to do," Miller said.

Participants have asked for pledges or donations from friends, family and coworkers as well on through the St. Jude Web site. Miller said his gym so far has about 30 confirmed "crunchers" and received about \$3,700 in pledges.

If each of the 200 participating gyms nationwide are able to raise \$5,000, they would meet the \$1 million goal. To run the children's hospital, Miller said, it costs about \$1.2 million each day.

"We hope that the community will come out and help that number grow," Miller said. "Every dime that we collect is going to St. Jude."

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