
Good News Department

Young Gymnasts Put New Spin On Good Deeds

(NAPSA)—A growing number of young people are tumbling to the benefits of a structured gymnastics program. Better coordination, increased flexibility and strength, improved confidence and self-esteem are just some of the things young people say they experience when they take up gymnastics.

But that's not all. According to former actor—and current Governor of California—Arnold Schwarzenegger, “gymnastics offers life skills for children. They learn how to control and respect their bodies. The discipline and learning serve as a healthy and fun foundation for participation in all sports.”

Soon, young gymnasts all across the country will apply both their athletic and life skills in the service of children in need. USA Gymnastics and its 2000 member clubs will show support for America's Children's Hospitals by pledging to raise money for the Children's Miracle Network (CMN) during the seventh annual National Gymnastics Day, slated for August 6, 2005.

“National Gymnastics Day has become a true celebration of the many benefits our sport has to offer,” said USA Gymnastics President Steve Penny. “Five years of continuous success and growth in supporting the Children's Miracle Network is an example of the power of the gymnastics industry and the community working together.”

Legendary Olympic coach Bela Karolyi and 1984 Olympic Champion Mary Lou Retton will co-chair the annual event, which serves to promote the ideals of physical fitness and community service to youth nationwide. USA Gymnastics clubs have contri-



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buted more than \$379,000 to CMN over the past five years by hosting Cartwheel-A-Thons and open-house activities for gymnasts and gymnastics supporters.

Now in his seventh year as honorary chairman, Karolyi has guided 27 different athletes including Retton, Nadia Comaneci, Kim Zmeskal and Kerri Strug.

Gymnastics clubs nationwide are encouraged to participate in the annual Cartwheel-A-Thon as a way to give back to the community. Participating gymnasts secure pledges within their community for the number of cartwheels the gymnast can perform on National Gymnastics Day.

Meghan Sweeney of Chardon, Ohio, a 14-year-old gymnast at Gymnastics World in Broadview Heights, OH, was the single largest fund-raiser in 2004, collecting nearly \$3,100 for CMN. Gymnastics World also raised the most among the clubs with a donation of \$16,100.

To learn more about the benefits of gymnastics and National Gymnastics Day, visit www.usa-gymnastics.org or www.cmn.org.