For more information, please contact Matt Baron, Five Seasons publicist, at 708-860-1380 or Matt@InsideEdgePR.com

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Five Seasons Burr Ridge Group Exercise Director Supports *HeartChase* Fundraiser, Bids to Break His Own Guinness World Record in Plank

When it comes to setting Guinness World Records, ultra-endurance athlete George Hood of Aurora has done it in a variety of ways: unofficially, officially, and officially while in support of a most worthy charitable cause.

On Saturday, April 20, the 55-year-old group exercise director at Five Seasons Family Sports Club in Burr Ridge will be striving to set a new world record in the third of those categories. On that day, he will try to shatter his own record in the abdominal plank of 1 hour, 20 minutes, 5.01 seconds.

And he will be traveling more than 300 miles to do it, as he makes his effort in Newport, Kentucky, in support of an American Heart Association fundraiser.

Guinness World Record officials this week informed Hood that another attempt to break his record had not been approved. Just the same, and in anticipation of others who might try to eclipse his mark, Hood is looking to extend his own record.

“I am a big believer in doing things with a purpose--and the greater the purpose, the more I am motivated and inspired to get involved,” says Hood. “I’m on a mission to raise money, accomplish a goal and help others on behalf of the American Heart Association. Heart disease is our nation’s number one killer and affects us all, directly or indirectly, in profound ways.”

Joseph Pinnell, vice president of club performance for the seven Five Seasons Family Sports Clubs throughout the Midwest, is serving for the second time as Newport HeartChase executive chairman.

He approached Hood about going for the Guinness World Record in conjunction with the event this year. There is renewed passion for Pinnell and other organizers this year: Bob Clements, a dear friend and sponsorship chair for the first HeartChase held last year, suffered a fatal heart attack while running a few months after the 2012 Newport HeartChase.

Clements had two previous heart attacks and seven stents placed into his heart. A major advocate for the American Heart Association, he previously served as President of the Northern Kentucky Board for the American Heart Association.

At 52, Clements was an active runner and had been cleared medically to resume activity before he died.

“I am saddened by stories like Bob’s,” Hood says. “He left behind countless friends and supporters and a loving family who miss him dearly. I was inspired to hear about the positive impact that Bob had on others, and am looking to build on that legacy with my record attempt.”

In December 2011, Hood shattered the previous plank record by nearly 30 minutes. Since then, he has performed longer planks during training sessions, including a 2-hour plank at Five Seasons Burr Ridge on Guinness World Records Day this past November and a 2-hour, 10-minute plank at the club on March 16 in conjunction with a Spinathon fundraiser.

The former Marine and Drug Enforcement Administration agent first attained Guinness World Record status in 1986, when he skipped rope for more than 13 hours. Six years ago, he re-launched his record-breaking bids with a pair of static “spin” cycling marathons at Five Seasons.

He has set the spin cycling record three times, including a high of 222 hours, 22 minutes and 22 seconds in 2010.

So far, Hood's Guinness World Record attempts have raised more than $100,000 for charities and organizations, including the family of Gunnar Hotchkin, a young soldier and friend who was killed in Afghanistan on June 16, 2010; the Injured Marine Semper Fi fund; Fox Valley United Way; Illinois Concerns of Police Survivors (COPS); Kiwanis of Willowbrook Burr Ridge; and the YMCA Strong Kids Campaign in Naperville.

This latest cause for Hood is most fitting, given his life's focus.

"Many of the problems that stem from heart disease can be eliminated by building a healthier community dedicated to promoting healthy living, exercise and healthy lifestyle habits," says Hood. "Having enjoyed a successful federal law enforcement career, for years I have committed myself to fitness and leading by example to help others lead healthier lives."

The Newport HeartChase is one of 40 HeartChase events happening across the country. Each is an innovative community event that provides a fun, new way to promote healthy living and support a great cause. For more details, visit www.heartchase.org or Hood's personal HeartChase page at http://honor.americanheart.org/goto/GeorgeHood

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