



USA Gymnastics exceeds \$1 million total for Children's Miracle Network

By Karen Saladyga

Gymnastics clubs across the country have raised more than \$1 million for Children's Miracle Network since the two organizations first partnered in 2001. Gym clubs and their members raised a record \$201,203 in 2008 as part of their celebrations for National Gymnastics Day through the Tyson Fitness Challenge, a joint initiative of USA Gymnastics and Tyson Foods that not only helps today's kids get more physically fit through fun activities, but also raises money to help kids who are fighting illnesses through Children's Miracle Network.

"It is heart-warming to see kids from our clubs make such an incredible effort for other young people who really need help," said Steve Penny, president of USA Gymnastics. "Children's Miracle Network is a fantastic organization that helps save the lives of kids every day. USA Gymnastics appreciates everything the gymnastics community has done to make this a success and is proud to have achieved this milestone in partnership with Tyson Foods."

In 2007, USA Gymnastics set its goal to have the accumulated donation total to Children's Miracle Network surpass the \$1 million mark by the end of 2008. This year's current donation of \$201,203, which is still growing, is the most ever raised annually by the gym club community for Children's Miracle Network.

The three clubs and three individuals who raised the most money for Children's Miracle Network in 2008 are listed in the accompanying box.

Four other individuals raised more than \$2,500: **Lauren Wise**, Sunshine Academy, Conway, Ark., \$3,228; **Lauren Briskey**, The Flip Zone, Plainfield, Ind., \$3,174; **Andrew Wise**, Sunshine Academy, Conway, Ark., \$2,925; and **Abby Vienneaue**, Gymnastics World, Broadview Heights, Ohio, \$2,851.

Continued on page 28

Top Fundraisers

Clubs (pictured below)

1. Gymnastics World, Broadview Heights, Ohio, \$32,000, taking its six-year total to \$122,951
2. Massachusetts Gymnastics Center, Boston, Mass., \$30,066
3. John Macready and John Roethlisberger Flip Fest of Lake Frances, Tenn., \$14,000

Individuals (pictured page 28)

1. Emma Timblin, Northern Elite, Flanders, N.J., \$4,425
2. Michelle Mook, Gymnastics World, Broadview Heights, Ohio, \$4,000
3. Mary Kate Cacchione, Northern Elite, Flanders, N.J., \$3,700



Massachusetts Gymnastics Center



John Macready and John Roethlisberger Flip Fest



Gymnastics World



Emma Timblin



Michelle Mook



Mary Kate Cacchione

Established in 1999, National Gymnastics Day is a platform to showcase the many benefits of gymnastics, as well as promote the ideals of physical fitness and community service nationwide. USA Gymnastics and its gym clubs began raising funds for Children's Miracle Network through National Gymnastics Day in 2001, and the Tyson Fitness Challenge became the fundraising platform in 2006.

Geared toward youngsters, ages 4-16, the Tyson Fitness Challenge is not about teaching gymnastics skills, but using gymnastics to help kids become more physically fit and to learn about a well-balanced diet. The culmination of the Tyson Fitness Challenge is voluntary participation in raising funds for Children's Miracle Network. Participants and clubs obtain pledges for achieving a set number of elements in a specified time, whether it is fitness-related skills, cartwheels, flips, etc.

Children's Miracle Network—the alliance of premier hospitals for children—is a non-profit organization dedicated to saving and improving the lives of children by raising funds for children's hospitals across North America. Each year the 170 Children's Miracle Network hospitals provide the finest medical care, life-saving research and preventative education to help millions of kids overcome diseases and injuries of every kind. For more information on Children's Miracle Network, visit www.childrensmiraclenetwork.org. ✕

Money raised by USA Gymnastics member clubs for Children's Miracle Network: 2001-08

NOTE: The club and individual who raised the most money each year are listed below.

2001: \$50,000

Club: DeVeau's School of Gymnastics, Fishers, Ind., \$3,132

Individual: Dalton Wixom, DeVeau's School of Gymnastics, Fishers, Ind., \$730

2002: \$65,774

Club: Tumble Town at Geist, Indianapolis, Ind., \$5,144

Individual: Dalton Wixom, DeVeau's School of Gymnastics, Fishers, Ind., \$1,600

2003: \$134,363

Club: Gymnastics World, Inc., Broadview Heights, Ohio, \$16,194

Individual: Amy Al-Ashari, Geddert's Twistars, Dimondale, Mich., \$2,867

2004: \$129,250

Club: Gymnastics World, Inc., Broadview Heights, Ohio, \$16,000

Individual: Megan Sweeney, Gymnastics World, Inc., Broadview Heights, Ohio, \$3,097

2005: \$130,906

Club: Gymnastics World, Inc., Broadview Heights, Ohio, \$17,073

Individual: Megan Sweeney, Gymnastics World, Inc., Broadview Heights, Ohio, \$2,773

2006: \$130,355

Club: Massachusetts Gymnastics Center, Boston, \$18,305

Individual: Andrew Wise, Sonshine Academy Gymnastics, Conway, Ark., \$2,578

2007: \$185,531

Club: Gymnastics World, Inc., Broadview Heights, Ohio, \$25,505

Individual: Andrew Wise, Sonshine Academy Gymnastics, Conway, Ark., \$3,707

2008: \$200,332

Club: Gymnastics World, Inc., Broadview Heights, Ohio, \$32,000

Individual: Emma Timblin, Northern Elite, Flanders, N.J., \$4,425

Winning Clubs' Q&A on page 30



National Gymnastics Day – Gymnastics World of Broadview Heights, Ohio, wins again

By Elizabeth Simonson



Joan & Ron Ganim

Gymnastics World- Broadview Heights, Ohio Club owners – Joan and Ron Ganim

USA Gym: Why did you decide to help raise money for Children's Miracle Network?

Ron Ganim: My wife and I have been in this business since 1975 and we believe in teaching the child, not just the sport. We teach the kids that there is life outside of gymnastics. There are people out there who need help and we have the opportunity to help them.

USA Gym: Do you do any other charitable fundraisers with your club?

Ron Ganim: Our gym participates in the Christmas Yuletide Hunger Program, which allows people anonymously to adopt families from the Cleveland area that need help with Christmas gifts and other needs. We typically adopt two or three families each year and donate items from their list.

USA Gymnastics: You've been the winning club five times in USA Gymnastics' eight-year partnership with Children's Miracle Network. Is there anything special that your club does each time you win?

Ron Ganim: Not really. We have never publicized the results, sent press releases, etc. I do not want the kids to think they are doing this for Gymnastics World's sake. Part of our message to them is we are doing it simply because it needs to be done.

USA Gymnastics: Does one year feel more rewarding than the others for any reason?

Ron Ganim: Each year brings a greater feeling of reward simply because it confirms my hope that the kids have bought into the concept of altruistic behavior. They are learning and developing a sense of responsibility to others.

Continued on page 43

This year's National Gymnastics Day and Tyson Fitness Challenge were a huge success. Gym clubs and their members raised a record \$201,203, allowing USA Gymnastics to reach its goal of raising \$1 million total for Children's Miracle Network by the end of 2008! USA Gymnastics had a chance to talk to Ron Ganim of Gymnastics World in Broadview Heights, Ohio, to get the inside scoop on the winning club's experience this year.



Continued from page 30

USA Gym: What was your favorite memory from this year's fundraiser?

Ron Ganim: My favorite memory was with one of our new team members. When we were checking up on the kids' progress with the fundraising, she said that she had raised \$975. Her dad used his credit card points to buy her two iPods and she set up an auction/drawing for each of them. She used the money from the drawings to donate to Children's Miracle Network.

USA Gymnastics: If you could say anything to a club thinking about participating next year, what would it be?

Ron Ganim: We are blessed with the opportunity to work with the best kids in the USA, day after day, week after week. Compared to other children, our kids are blessed with healthy, strong and flexible bodies. They have family supporting their efforts to achieve excellence and all too often, they develop a sense of self-importance to a degree that often causes selfish behavior. Our responsibility to

each and every child is to teach them as a person, not to coach them as an athlete. Heck, most anyone who studies and observes can learn the sport, but only some will ever be called teachers. The others are coaches. Your participation and support of Children's Miracle Network is one strong way of working with your gymnasts as kids, not athletes, and to help them realize what life is like for other kids their age. It helps them develop a stronger respect for their good health, as well as learn how to become a valuable member of their community.

**2nd place
winner --
Massachusetts
Gymnastics
Center- Boston,
MA
Club Owner-
Mike Colarossi**

USA Gymnastics: Why did you decide to help raise money for Children's Miracle Network?

Mike Colarossi: We've been doing a fundraiser for almost 10 years annually so we jumped on board when USA Gymnastics announced that they were partnering with Children's Miracle Network.

USA Gymnastics: How did you encourage your students to participate in the fundraiser?

Mike Colarossi: We run a cartwheel-a-





thon and anyone that raises more than \$25 gets a t-shirt for the event and we funnel the money to Children's Hospital Boston. It's a great cause and the big push that we put on is kids helping kids. It really encourages a lot of the kids to participate.

USA Gymnastics: If you could say anything to a club/athlete thinking about participating, what would you tell them?

Mike Colarossi: I think it really helps build relationships with the community, gives the kids a sense of being and helping out, and it really goes right along with our philosophy of teaching the kids a lot more than gymnastics. We're teaching them how to participate in their communities and be active.

USA Gymnastics: What was your favorite memory from this year's fundraiser?

Mike Colarossi: Just the number of participants we had. It keeps growing each year and its great to see so many kids jumping in and helping out.

USA Gymnastics: If you could change one thing about your experience, what would it be?

Mike Colarossi: We would have hyped it up with the media a little more, but other than that, it went very smoothly and was a great experience.

3rd place winner
-- John Macready's and John Roethlisberger's Flip Fest- Lake Francis, TN Club Owner- John Macready and John Roethlisberger



USA Gymnastics: Why did you decide to help raise money for Children's Miracle Network?

John Macready: John and I always like to try to give back and do some sort of charity event every year and when USA Gymnastics approached us about working with Children's Miracle Network, we just wanted to be in on it. Ever since we launched the benefit last year, the kids have just loved it and really jumped on board with making it an annual thing. I think it teaches the kids a lot about giving back.

USA Gymnastics: How did you encourage your students to

participate in the fundraiser?

John Macready: We get everybody together, usually about 200-250 people, and explain to them what the CMN does and how fortunate they are and how many kids want to be in their position. We love to give back in this happy time of being at summer camp. We put everybody in categories and tell them they can either do a tie-dye t-shirt for \$15 and all of the money goes to CMN and they get to tie-dye their own Flip Fest t-shirt that says "I Gave Back"; be in the "just donate" category; or they can choose not to participate at all. We always stress that you do not have to donate, it is purely up to you, but most of the kids usually give at least a little bit.

USA Gymnastics: What was your favorite memory from this year's fundraiser?

John Macready: When I gave my speech about giving back and I said, "You can give 25 cents or you can give \$5 or \$10, whatever you would like to give." As I was getting out the balloons and preparing to write the amounts that each child wants to give, this

girl wrote that she wanted to give \$77. I asked her if she was sure she wanted to give \$77 or did she mean \$7. She said, "No \$77." I asked her if she was sure that was ok and she replied, "Yeah, I have way too much money."

USA Gymnastics: If you could say anything to a club/athlete thinking about participating, what would you tell them?

John Macready: I would tell them that it's a good feeling getting everybody behind something like this and it's an easy cause to get behind because of what CMN does. A lot of people might look at it and think of the time that it takes, but I just stress to them that if you raise even \$100, that's enough. If you take the time to mention it just one time to your club, that's enough. Don't worry about doing too much or too little, just get in there and do something and you'll really feel the benefits of it.

For the full interviews with the top three clubs please visit our website at www.usa-gymnastics.org. ✖

WHAT'S NEW



The Club Task Force Committee met in Indianapolis, Ind., at the USA Gymnastics offices Nov. 4-6. Left to Right: Dave Peterson, Loree Galimore, Kathy Feldmann, Erica Koven, Dave Holcomb, Carisa Laughon, Steve Penny, Bobbi Montanari, Kathy Ostberg and Beau Biron.

Register Your Summer Gymnastics Camp Online

Would you like your summer camp information placed online free of charge on the USA Gymnastics website? If so, go to www.usa-gymnastics.org/camps and click "add a camp." It will take a day or two to be posted once you register your camp online.