



Teamwork: How a family worked together to help others

By Elizabeth Simonson

Andrew and Lauren Wise are a very unique team. Not only are they brother and sister, but they have found a way to combine healthy competition with a common drive to help seriously ill children. The duo has been raising money for Children's Miracle Network since 2006 and raised a combined total of \$13,280.82. Because Andrew and Lauren have such a unique story, we wanted to share it with the gymnastics community. We had the chance to talk to the Wise family and get the inside scoop on their experiences with the Tyson Fitness Challenge and Children's Miracle Network.

USA Gymnastics: Whose idea was it to do the Tyson Fitness Challenge?

Lauren: The first year (2006) it was Andrew's idea.

Andrew: This year, Lauren was the one who was really enthused about the fundraiser and she pushed me to stay involved, participate, and raise money.

Renee (mom): In 2006 Andrew came home from gym one day saying he wanted to raise money to help the kids at the hospital. He did not even have a clue there was a contest and we were all totally shocked when he won a trip to the Tyson American Cup.

James (dad): Lauren helped Andrew in 2006 by going door to door with him. Lauren not only participated in 2007, but she also wanted to make sure he reached his goal and helped Andrew by sponsoring him with some of her lemonade funds.

USA Gymnastics: Lauren, what made you want to help your brother raise money for Arkansas Children's Hospital (ACH)?

Lauren: I just wanted to help sick kids like my friend Spencer. He was really sick and stayed a very long time last year in the ICU at ACH. We were so grateful when Spencer finally was well enough to go home! At first I just set a goal to beat my last year's total (\$42.82) and raise \$1000. Then, after I reached my goal, I decided I really wanted to try and beat Andrew!

USA Gymnastics: Do either of you participate in any other sports?



Lauren and Andrew Wise

Andrew: I have played baseball every summer since I was 4.

Lauren: I take ballet, tap, jazz, modern, and hip hop dance. I just got my Pointe shoes! I take gymnastics and tumbling at Sonshine Gymnastics in the summers for the past three years.

USA Gymnastics: How do you go about raising the money? Do you use the on-line program or do you ask people in person?

Andrew: We both did the on-line fundraising and also went door to door in our neighborhood. Our mom and dad forwarded our e-mail to friends and people they work with. We both asked our family and friends at church to donate as well.

Lauren: My friends sold lemonade with me in our neighborhood. We charged 75 cents for a big glass but most people would give us a dollar or more when they learned we were giving all the money to ACH.

USA Gymnastics: What made you decide to do front flips as your element on National Gymnastics Day?

Lauren: I had just learned how to do front flips this summer and I wanted to see if I could do 100! I did!

Andrew: I just wanted to see how many flips I could do on the trampoline in 30 minutes. I decided to try for 500. 502 flips in 28 minutes was the answer.

USA Gymnastics: If you could say one thing to a kid thinking about doing the Tyson Fitness Challenge next year, what would it be?

Andrew: It is a great thing to do. It feels

really good to accomplish your goal and to help other kids. It is great to know the money you raise may help someone get well.

USA Gymnastics: What is your favorite part of the Tyson Fitness Challenge and National Gymnastics Day?

Lauren: Actually doing the skills and having fun at the Sonshine Back to School Bash!

USA Gymnastics: Renee and James, have you noticed any changes in your children since they have participated in this fundraiser?

James: Our children have grown up in our church participating in activities and doing mission work with the youth group. As they have grown older we think that they do realize they have many advantages other kids do not have and that they are also very blessed to be healthy.

Renee: Personally knowing kids treated at ACH both for injuries and also routine and severe illnesses we think motivated them to want to help.

USA Gymnastics: Do the kids get any kind of reward from you by participating or reaching a certain goal?

James: Yes, we matched the first \$100 they raised. We've actually done this each year they participated. Because of the economy doing poorly this year, we promised to donate another \$100 for every \$1000 they raised. You have to be very careful what you promise. You just may have to make good on it! We also donated \$100 for achieving their skill goal. ☒