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Fitness Together Helps Client in Wheelchair Fight Disease with Exercise

Personal trainer and client film DVD to raise funds for research.

TEMECULA, Calif. – DATE, 2009 -- When Kerry Westfall was diagnosed at age 16 with a rare neurodegenerative disease that had no treatments or cures, the news was devastating. But 15 years later with the debut of his own exercise DVD, he couldn't be more optimistic.

That's because, at 31, Westfall did the unexpected when he decided to videotape himself exercising.

Confined to a wheelchair with the genetic disorder Friedreich's ataxia, Westfall was faced with a future of muscle weakness, a loss of arm and leg coordination, curvature of the spine, vision impairment, hearing loss, slurred speech and early death. He overcame the depression of his situation and got active instead.

With the help of personal trainer Ed Ferrell, who owns a Fitness Together studio in Temecula, Calif., the two put together a fitness schedule that has helped Westfall maintain maximum control over his body in spite of his medical condition.

"At Fitness Together, we work with thousands of clients at studios throughout the country, giving every one a tailored workout with a personal trainer to help him or her achieve their goals," Ferrell said. "But for a client like Kerry, those goals also mean fighting a debilitating disease. He's been an incredible inspiration and has motivated countless others to cherish their health."

In return, the DVD they have created has become an inspiration for thousands. It was produced to raise funds for the Westfall Foundation (www.westfallfoundation.org), which plans to aid research for neuromuscular diseases and assist others with the diagnosis.

"Really, I just ask for a donation to help my cause," Westfall said. "The DVD is free."

While Friedreich's ataxia affects one out of 50,000 people worldwide and usually results in death by the age of 40, Westfall is convinced that his exercise regimen has helped him stay fit and stabilize the symptoms that others succumb to much earlier.

With Ferrell as his exercise mentor and a long line of doctors and medical researchers among his support team, Westfall has used himself as an example for others to follow, sick or not. While most people know that exercise is good for you, his personal journey has provided that extra motivation to champion healthy living for all as well as help his foundation in particular.

Entitled “Commit to Your Health” (www.committoyourhealth.org), the DVD includes detailed footage of Westfall’s workout routine with Ferrell. It also includes interviews with doctors for segments on nutrition, neurology, cardiology and osteopathic medicine.

Westfall said the DVD was the answer to many questions: “How can I show people what I care about – fitness, health and overcoming my disease? What can I do to educate everyone on the secrets I have learned and been taught by my mentors? How can I show people that the fact that I use a wheelchair has very little bearing on achieving my personal goals?”

For a copy of the DVD, visit www.committoyourhealth.org.

About Fitness Together Franchise Corp.:

Established in 1996 in response to the growing demand for personal fitness training, Fitness Together offers the latest in one-on-one personal training. Based in Highlands Ranch, Colo., Fitness Together is part of Fitness Together Holdings, Inc., the world's largest wellness organization. There are now more than 490 Fitness Together franchise locations throughout the United States, Costa Rica, Israel, Ireland, and Canada. For additional information, log onto www.fitnessstogether.com or call 877.663.0880 ext. 10.

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