

For Immediate Release

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Quincy Therapist Fights for Clients who Cannot Fight for Themselves

Boston, MA, April 30, 2003 --- Tracy D'Arpino is in training. As a post-rehab physical trainer, she understands all too well the importance of conditioning her muscles for use, and she is getting ready to put those muscles to a very good use.

D'Arpino is the owner of Fitness Factor, a health and wellness studio on Wollaston Beach designed to help build back muscular strength to those who have lost it.

Tragically though, all the training in the world cannot do this for some of her clients. D'Arpino currently treats and has treated in the past several patients with a heartbreaking and mysterious neuromuscular disease called ALS. Many people know ALS as Lou Gehrig's disease. For these patients, successful therapy is not rebuilding muscle, but rather learning how to breathe when muscles that control breathing capacity have irrevocably wasted.

ALS is a fatal disease that progressively paralyzes its victims, while leaving their mental capabilities intact. The lifespan for someone diagnosed with ALS is between two to five years. ALS usually strikes those from ages 40-70, and 30,000 Americans currently have the disease.

The local effects of this disease have touched Tracy very personally. Despite her multiple degrees in physical therapy and exercise science, she has watched helplessly as patients wither away from this brutal disease.

"ALS is a terrifying disease, both to the patient afflicted with it and loved ones who must sit by and watch its cruel and relentless progression," said D'Arpino. "If I can help patients manage the disease more successfully, I feel very satisfied."

Next month, D'Arpino will help in another way. On Sunday, May 18th, Tracy will join hundreds of other cyclists in the **Positive Spin for ALS™**, a fundraiser consisting of four concurrent bike rides that start at the Longfellow Club on Route 20 in Wayland, MA. The routes are 10, 25, 50 and 100 miles in length, and each is named in honor of a local person or family stricken with ALS.

Unlike many projects that fund ALS research only, proceeds from the Positive Spin funds support services for more than 200 local patients and families living with ALS, in addition to the national research projects that will one day unlock the mystery of the disease.

“I chose to support this particular fund raiser because it is the only one, to the best of my knowledge, that funds services for current patients and their caregivers,” said D’Arpino. “I’ve seen how devastating this disease is, firsthand, and while I support research to find a cure for tomorrow, my bias as a therapist is to help those who are suffering today.”

At advanced stages, care for an ALS patient can cost up to \$200,000 per year. Money raised through this event finances programs such as a durable equipment loan program and respite care, for 200 local patients and their families through the ALS Association, MA Chapter.

This disease can strike anyone. It does not discriminate based on gender, race, color or creed. While some patients are in a position to finance the around-the-clock care ALS requires, most are not. “The equipment provided by the association, for example, and the advice and advocacy their people provide is immeasurably helpful to patients and caregivers,” said Paul Tamburello, founder of the Positive Spin for ALS.

“The patients I have seen who have suffered with ALS were some of the most beautiful, indomitable spirits I have ever known. I look forward to riding in their honor, and in many cases, their memory, and I ask anyone who is truly thankful for their health to get involved with the ride themselves or to consider sponsoring my ride.”

To learn more about the Positive Spin for ALS, visit the event web site at www.positivespinforals.org. If you wish to sponsor Tracy D’Arpino in her ride, she can be reached at (617) 376-2223.

About the Positive Spin for ALS™

The Positive Spin for ALS™ is an annual cycling event and fund raiser consisting of four concurrent bike rides designed for riders of any ability. The routes are 10, 25, 50 and 100-miles in length, and each is named in honor of a local person stricken with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, (ALS).

At advanced stages, care for an ALS patient can cost up to \$200,000 per year. Money raised through this event finances programs such as a durable equipment loan program and respite care, for 200 local patients and their families through the ALS Association, MA Chapter. The money also supports national research to find effective treatments and ultimately a cure for ALS. For more information about the ride, visit www.positivespinforals.org.

About The ALS Association, Massachusetts Chapter

The ALS Association is the only national not-for-profit health agency dedicated solely to the fight against amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS. The ALS Association covers all the bases - research, patient and community services, public education, and advocacy - in providing help and hope to those facing the disease. The mission of The ALS Association (ALSA) is to find a cure for and improve living with ALS. The MA Chapter of the organization currently serves over 200 ALS patients. For more information, please visit www.als-ma.org.

About Fitness Factor

Located on Wollaston Beach in Quincy, MA, Fitness Factor is a studio designed for anyone who needs assistance with physical training, either post-rehabilitation or simply to improve their strength, balance, endurance, or overall physical well being. The Fitness Factor also provides guidance in yoga, walking, hiking, general exercise including Pilates, weight training, and functional activities. Programs for children and teens are also offered. Fitness Factor is open Monday through Saturday. For more information, call (617) 376-2223 or email thefitnessfactor@yahoo.com.