



HEALTH & FITNESS TOUR OF AMERICA

*A grass roots initiative to improve our nation's health
one community at a time*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -

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One Man; One Mission; One Push across America

Nashville, TN – Kevin Saunders, former world champion and three-time Paralympic wheelchair athlete, began the journey of a lifetime June 15, 2004, pushing his wheelchair from Canada to Mexico as part of his 50-state Health and Fitness Tour of America. Saunders launched his journey in Detroit; his route will take him through Toledo, Ft. Wayne, Indianapolis, St. Louis, Memphis, Little Rock, Shreveport, Dallas, Houston, Austin, San Antonio and Laredo, Texas.

“I’m pushing my chair across the country to demonstrate that if I can overcome the obstacles that stand in my way, anyone can,” said Saunders. “I firmly believe that the battle against obesity and unhealthy lifestyles will be won in the local communities.”

Saunders is attempting to draw attention to the need for communities throughout our nation to focus on lifelong health and fitness. In addition to pushing his chair across the country, Saunders will meet with state and local leaders to facilitate a discussion designed to launch a community-based grass-roots approach to achieving a healthier Nation—one community at a time.

Saunders is also using the Tour to support key messages of the American Heart Association, one of the three nonprofits benefiting from Tour sponsorship proceeds.

For the past twelve months, Saunders has trained and prepared for this journey. It is estimated that Saunders’ route from Detroit to Laredo will cover approximately 2,000 miles and take twelve weeks to complete.

Saunders is not a stranger to physical challenge and hard work. In 1981, he was injured in a grain-elevator explosion in Corpus Christi, Texas which severed his spinal column and paralyzed him from the chest down. Saunders’ spirit pushed him to overcome these devastating injuries and then to become a world champion wheelchair athlete. Saunders went on to represent the United States three times in the Paralympic Games.

Saunders was the first person with a disability to be appointed to the President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports. He was appointed to the Council by President George H. Bush and later reappointed by President Bill Clinton.

The Tour, which is operated by the nonprofit, Kevin Saunders Health and Fitness Foundation, is funded through private and corporate donations. Profits from the sponsorships will be donated to the American Heart Association, the YMCA and the American Diabetes Association. Saunders and the Tour have already received endorsements and invitations from state Governors such as Arnold Schwarzenegger, Rick Perry of Texas and Bob Taft of Ohio to name a few.

For a media press kit and more information about the Tour, please visit www.healthandfitnesstour.com.

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