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Biggest Loser finalist Joe Ostaszewski to stop in **Los Angeles during bike ride across America**

Ostaszewski's "Riding it Forward" journey to engage California's 4-H youth with a pledge to live healthy, fight obesity

Los Angeles, CA (8/22/2014) - Joe Ostaszewski, Biggest Loser finalist and former Florida State University defensive lineman, says the Biggest Loser show saved his life. Now, he's "riding it forward" in a 2,900-mile bike ride across the country to inspire others and help save American youth from the dangers of childhood obesity. He will stop in **Los Angeles** on **September 25** to motivate local 4-H youth to take the pledge to live a healthy lifestyle and join the fight against childhood obesity.

Ostaszewski, a fan favorite from season 14 of The Biggest Loser who lost 147 lbs more than a year ago, is partnering with National 4-H Council to engage 4-H, the nation's largest youth development organization, in the effort to mobilize and motivate American youth through "Riding it Forward." Sponsored by Marucci sports, his ride will begin on July 31 at the National 4-H Youth Conference Center in Chevy Chase, Md. and conclude on September 26 at the Biggest Loser Ranch in Calabasas, Calif.

During his stop in Los Angeles, you are invited for a ride along with Joe from Hermosa Beach to Santa Monica Pier (15 miles) starting at 4pm.

"Obesity is a serious, chronic disease that is threatening the lives of millions of Americans, but I am living proof that there is a cure," said Ostaszewski, Biggest Loser finalist and co-founder, Wear Your Soul Project. "The focus of my Wear Your Soul Project is equipping today's youth to live healthy, active lifestyles, which aligns perfectly with the mission of 4-H to empower young people to tackle urgent issues and Marucci Sports' commitment to engaging youth in physical activity."

Along the "Riding it Forward" journey, Ostaszewski will engage with local 4-H healthy living activities including healthy cooking competitions, nutrition quiz bowls, youth yoga and instructional seminars. While in California, youth will be invited to make a pledge to healthy living and sign their name on the "Riding it Forward" RV that will travel with Joe across the nation.

Youth who can't join in person will also be able to pledge to run, walk, bike or exercise a certain number of miles and secure donations for each mile they complete. All proceeds will go to support Wear Your Soul Project and National 4-H Council's mission to empower youth across the nation to live healthier lives. For more information, please visit www.ridingitforward.com.

About CA 4-H

The University of California, Agriculture and Natural Resources (UCANR) 4-H Youth Development Program focuses on science, healthy living and citizenship. Youth participate in approximately 140,000 science, engineering and technology related projects, 13,000 healthy living projects, and 28,000 citizenship projects each year across 57 counties. Results of recent evaluations demonstrate that youth engaged in 4-H excel at a greater level in school and in the sciences, make more healthy choices and more actively contribute to their communities than non-4-H youth.

4-H Youth Development academics and staff educate 122,000 youth annually through high-quality programming, including 32,000 youth in the community club program. Nearly 14,000 trained adult volunteers devote over 1,050,000 hours of volunteer service annually to provide youth education programs – services valued at nearly \$26 million.¹

More information on CA 4-H: 4h.ucanr.edu

About National 4-H Council

4-H, the nation's largest youth development and empowerment organization, cultivates confident kids who tackle the issues that matter most in their communities right now. In the United States, 4-H programs empower six million young people through the 109 land-grant universities and Cooperative Extension in more than 3,000 local offices serving every county and parish in the country. Outside the United States, independent, country-led 4-H organizations empower one million young people in more than 50 countries. National 4-H Council is the private sector, non-profit partner of the Cooperative Extension System and 4-H National Headquarters located at the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) within the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Learn more about 4-H at www.4-H.org.

About Wear Your Soul

Wear Your Soul is a non-profit corporation formed by Joe and Henry Ostaszewski. The identical twin brothers are dedicated to improving the health of our nation's children by tackling obesity, an epidemic plaguing our country. Wear Your Soul Experiences encourage non-competitive sports that help children fighting obesity improve their physical, mental and emotional health. For more information about the organization, visit their website at www.wearyoursoul.org.

About Marucci Sports

Based in Baton Rouge, La., Marucci was founded by two former Major Leaguers and their athletic trainer who began handcrafting bats from their garage. Fast forward 10 years, and that dedication to quality and understanding of players' needs has turned the company into an All-American success story with Marucci being the number one bat in the Big Leagues. Today, Marucci makes wood and aluminum bats, batting gloves, bags, protective gear, and other baseball accessories. Star players like Albert Pujols, Chase Utley, David Ortiz, Jose Bautista, and Andrew McCutchen invest their hard-earned money and time to advise Marucci on product design and test its products.

¹ Independent Sector value of volunteer time in California