

TL05

IN MOTION

# Aurora man's world-record attempt goes social

George Hood of Aurora is not afraid of challenges. And that's a good thing.

The ultra-endurance athlete is currently training to break the Guinness World Record in stationary bike riding, a fundraising feat that will benefit the Fox Valley United Way youth programs and the Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund.

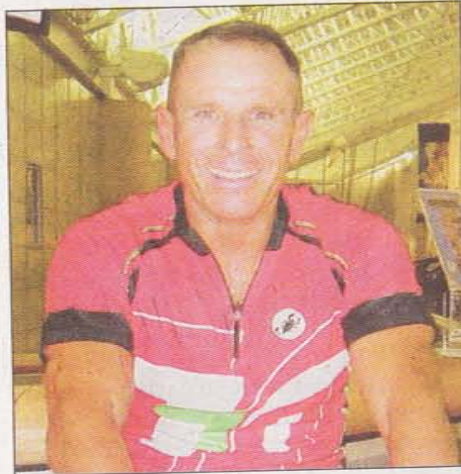
Already a three-time world record holder, the 300-hour Ride IV Reasons record attempt will take place April 11 to April 24 at Rush-Copley Healthplex, 1900 Ogden Ave., Aurora.

Hood's previous record-setting rides have benefited other charity groups, with nearly \$100,000 raised.

Hood realizes that besides preparing for the mental and physical tests he faces, he must also address the challenge of charitable fundraising during a depressed economy.

His solution is to reach out to the public via social media channels.

"I'm trying to raise money and awareness through a grass-roots effort," Hood said. "But I don't have time to go door-to-door to collect money. I needed to find a better way."



George Hood

Photo submitted by B2b Interactive Marketing

When Hood adds an update to his blog, it automatically feeds into the LinkedIn profile, Facebook and Twitter.

... I don't have time to go door-to-door to collect money. I needed to find a better way.

—George Hood, Aurora resident

## Getting linked in

Brian Basilico, President of B2b Interactive Marketing in Aurora, an organization that uses social media and networking. Basilico helped Hood to set up a Ride IV Reasons blog, a Facebook fan page and a Facebook cause page.

Basilico linked the blog to the Facebook fan page as well as to Hood's LinkedIn profile and Twitter account.

Basilico sees social media as an underutilized method for financially-strapped non-profit organizations to get their message out.

"Social media is a tool that can generate awareness really fast," Basilico said. "Look at what recently happened in Iran and Haiti. The first information coming out was through Twitter. Right now, the various networking sites are all buzzing with donation opportunities and information about the Haitian earthquake."

"If you have a legitimate message to send, you can easily leverage the social networks to create relationships with a broader audience," he added. "That is what I've done for [Hood]; he has an amazing

story, but needed some help to let people know."

For Hood, training continues to be the main focus—that, and being a father to three sons.

Hood hopes to serve as an inspiration to others, especially youth. His message is that nothing is ever good enough and individuals should strive to reach bigger goals without giving up.

With the challenge Hood is facing, "don't give up" will likely become a battle cry.

Donations for the cause are being accepted through Fox Valley United Way and also on the Ride IV Reasons cause page on Facebook.

To learn more, Hood can be contacted by e-mail at [trainer4663@yahoo.com](mailto:trainer4663@yahoo.com). Hood's blog can be found at [www.ride-georgeride.org](http://www.ride-georgeride.org), and those interested in following his Twitter updates can go to [www.twitter.com/trainer4663](http://www.twitter.com/trainer4663).

—This story was submitted by B2b Interactive Marketing, an Aurora-based marketing firm.

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