

## Gary Westlund – Bio

Gary Westlund, Certified American College of Sports Medicine Exercise Physiologist, and USA Track and Field Level II Coach, is founder and CEO of Charities Challenge with RxExercise (exercise as medicine) fulfillment as its mission. In that pursuit, Gary and CC Race Event Worker volunteers actively support many other MN road races and track events in addition to CC's own 22 annual road race events.

As a professional race announcer, Coach Gary delights in delivering enthusiastic, vocal support to all runners at many racing events, along with motivating music.

And, as a professional race photographer, Coach Gary has encouraged thousands of athletes of all ages and abilities with their action photos that remind them of how far they've come, how strong they are, how many others they inspire, and how they're recognized for all their achievements with "Coach Gary's Photos". Scores of Gary's photos have been published in print and online stories, and serve as athlete's profile photos.

Coach Westlund has coached many hundreds of runners and marathoners, in addition to the fastest race walkers in MN, while setting lasting records himself in race walking. He has traveled with 30 of his charities teams to destination events around the world, teams that have also raised nearly two million dollars for health-related causes.

Gary specializes as a coach to athletes challenged by a variety of chronic diseases, especially those living actively and well beyond arthritis, cancer, diabetes, heart disease and other health challenges, some to new championship performances despite those challenges.

With the inspiration of several remarkable health-challenged athletes, Coach Gary recognized the need for ongoing active exercise leadership programs and services to people in special populations.

So, in active partnership with his health-challenged athlete friends, Westlund founded in 2003, and continues to lead, Charities Challenge, Inc, a 501(c)(3) organization, with delivering RxExercise as the most important Charities' Challenge. CC delivers RxExercise Programs and Events to both health challenged, and not-yet health challenged, athletes.

When diagnosed with congenital hip dysplasia that required Total Hips Arthroplasty, Gary himself joined the challenged-athlete special population.

Because he "walks his talks" regarding RxExercise, Coach Gary has returned to satisfying competition in race walking and running to become the "fastest athlete on 2xTotal Hips Replacement" in MN, continues coaching both apparently healthy and challenged athletes more than ever before his personal osteoarthritis challenges, and still travels the world with teams of athletes demonstrating the Power of RxExercise to improve lives, especially health-challenged lives.

Gary knows, "THERE IS NO CURE for all the ills associated with lack of exercise", and so he enthusiastically shares his RxExercise leadership programs, coaching services, and unique events ideas with other exercise leaders ready to "Share the RxExercise Challenge".