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Madonna ICARE by SportsArt Earns International da Vinci Innovation Award

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LINCOLN, Neb.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--April 19, 2013--

The Madonna ICARE by Sports Art Fitness (ICARE) won the international da Vinci Innovation Award in the Recreation and Leisure category at the annual event ceremony held April 11 in Dearborn, Michigan. Established in 2001, the da Vinci Awards (www.davinciawards.org) is a prestigious international forum recognizing the latest research and developments in technologies that enable people of all abilities to fully participate in life and society.

Dr. Judith Burnfield, PT, and Thad Buster assist a client on the ICARE. (Photo: Ed Mejia)

For individuals who have experienced a stroke, brain injury, spinal cord injury, multiple sclerosis or other disabling condition, regaining the ability to walk and improving overall conditioning are important rehabilitation goals. Existing therapeutic technology tends to be very labor intensive and/or expensive and not readily available outside of a specialized rehabilitation hospital.

The ICARE is a motorized elliptical trainer designed for use in hospitals, fitness facilities and homes to help people of all abilities, even those with very limited mobility, improve their walking and cardiovascular fitness. Unlike a typical elliptical, the ICARE offers powered support so it is easier for people with weakness and/or limited mobility begin and maintain exercise. The patented motorized control and sensor automatically adjusts the level of support during exercise, so as a person needs more support, the power automatically increases, as the person needs less support, the motorized power decreases. The ICARE eliminates the need for therapists to repeatedly lift and move a patient's legs, as with existing body weight supported treadmills.

At about one-tenth the cost of robotic treadmill devices, the ICARE provides a unique solution for helping people with weakness and limited mobility exercise in a walking-like pattern. The ICARE's height adjustable seat, body weight support system, stairs, platforms, ramp, and adapted pedals enable its use by people with even severe mobility limitations.

With a 3-year, \$600,000 grant from the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, Judy Burnfield, PT, PhD, director of the Institute for Rehabilitation Science and Engineering at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital, led the team that developed the ICARE, including Institute researchers Yu Shu, PhD, Thad Buster and Adam Taylor. Carl Nelson, PhD, from the Department of Mechanical and Materials Engineering the University of Nebraska-Lincoln was co-investigator of the project. The team also worked with SourceOne custom manufacturing and NUtech Ventures, an affiliate of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

The ICARE quickly received two U.S. patents and in July 2012, Madonna partnered with SportsArt Fitness Inc. to manufacture and distribute the ICARE, which is now available throughout the U.S. and in 80 countries worldwide.

More information about the ICARE is available at <http://www.sportsartamerica.com/icare> or call 800.709.1400 x201.

Learn about other Madonna Research Institute projects at http://www.madonna.org/research_institute/.

Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital is one of the nation's foremost facilities for medical rehabilitation and research. Specializing in traumatic brain injury, spinal cord injury and pediatric rehabilitation, Madonna offers hope and healing to thousands of patients from throughout the country each year.

Madonna's team of highly specialized physiatrists, therapists, rehabilitation nurses, clinicians and researchers work with the most advanced technology and equipment to help each person achieve the highest level of independence.

Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital is located at 5401 South Street in Lincoln, Nebraska, 68506; 402-489-7102; www.madonna.org.

SportsArt Fitness is an industry leader in the design and manufacture of high quality cardiovascular and strength equipment for medical and commercial use. SportsArt retains control over every aspect of component design and the overall manufacturing process to ensure proper integration, maximum performance and longer product life. SportsArt Fitness has received TÜV certifications for ISO 9001 quality management and ISO 14001 environmental management and holds hundreds of worldwide patents for their innovations. For more information on the SportsArt Fitness brand and their latest products visit www.sportsartamerica.com/icare.

Photos/Multimedia Gallery Available: <http://www.businesswire.com/multimedia/home/20130419005129/en/>

CONTACT: Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital
Molly Nance, 402-413-4290

Director of Strategic Planning and Marketing

mnance@madonna.org

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