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**ONE MAN'S RACE: 200 MILES FOR LYME DISEASE AWARENESS**  
*Preparation and motivation for the run of a lifetime*

New Canaan, CT, May, 2008 -- Carl Asker, husband, father of three and Director of Finance for a NYC corporation, started running at the tender age of 37 with no running background. He thought he had met his biggest physical challenge in life when he started participating in Ironman distance triathlons in 2003 at the age of 40. But when he contracted a particularly hard-to-treat case of Lyme disease in 2006, he discovered what an "Ironman" every day of his life would become, as he spent more than a year and a half recovering from this disease.

Now 44, four Ironmans later and over a dozen marathons, Carl is training for his first 200-mile ultramarathon in Pittsfield, Vermont on November 6, 2008. He has dedicated his run, and all of the training runs preparing for it, to promote awareness for Lyme disease research by running under the banner "There is hope! - Team TFL" in honor of *Time for Lyme, Inc.*, a Lyme disease advocacy and education foundation in Greenwich, CT.

"We are so proud to support Carl's commitment and inner strength to undertake such a grueling athletic challenge and thrilled at his efforts to create awareness about the serious nature of Lyme disease", said Diane Blanchard, co-president of Time for Lyme.

Carl was training for a 140 mile triathlon "Ironman" race in Nice, France, when he woke up one morning with a giant insect bite that developed into the classic bull's eye rash indicative of Lyme disease. Then, Carl got *really* sick. He was chronically fatigued and fell asleep during the day. His joints—knee, wrist, and hip—ached nonstop. He had a throbbing headache and stiff neck that could not be relieved with over-the-counter pain relievers. He experienced heart palpitations, drenching night sweats, and worst of all, nervous electrical shocks that caused spasmodic head and neck jerks.

Carl's recovery was a long and slow process. The first doctor who treated him after the symptoms appeared did not test for tick-borne illnesses, but put him on a 4-week course of antibiotics that triggered a severe toxic reaction known as "Herxheimer's reaction", which mimicked a heart attack. After a month on medication, the symptoms persisted, and a second doctor conducted a Western blot test which indicated that Carl not only had Lyme disease, he also had another tick-borne disease called Ehrlichiosis that made the Lyme disease even more difficult to treat according to his doctor. After more unsuccessful treatment, he was ultimately inserted with a long catheter in his arm through which he self-injected still more antibiotics.

"The most agonizing part of this whole ordeal was that it was so hard to get conclusive test results from the diagnosis, or to find out whether the medications were working," he explains. "This is truly a fickle and complicated disease. Why aren't there any tests that can give accurate diagnoses, once and for all?" "We need a different and more robust testing method."

By September of 2007, Carl was finally feeling more like his old self, and he began training again for marathons, setting his sights on the Vermont Ultramarathon to challenge himself and help bring much needed attention to this devastating disease. "This race symbolizes the quest for more research which has been and continues to be an endurance race. It takes preparation and persistence" He is hoping that his run will raise money for research that can open the door to more effective treatments than the traditional antibiotic therapy he endured for so long.

Connecticut State Attorney General Richard Blumenthal's office recently announced the settlement of a landmark antitrust investigation into the guidelines for Lyme disease treatment established by the

Infectious Disease Society of America (ISDA). The ISDA guidelines were successfully challenged on the grounds of commercial conflicts of interest.

Because the IDSA guidelines are often treated as mandatory by the medical community, the investigation involved more than 50 physicians who use state-sanctioned longer-term treatment protocols. Diane Blanchard explains the importance of exposing these guidelines to broader scrutiny, "The IDSA guidelines are dangerous for patients who suffer longer-term Lyme symptoms that do not fall within the IDSA's narrow disease definition." The result of the settlement is expected to drive a science-based review of Lyme disease treatment recommendations to improve the current diagnostic criteria and available therapeutic options.

"What makes this intracellular disease so complicated are the many various strains and co-infections with other tick-borne diseases, such as TBE (tick-borne encephalitis) and Ehrlichiosis," Carl adds. As a father of three, he worries about increasing risks to young children. "People don't realize how small these ticks are (poppy-seed sized in the potent nymph stage), and how hard it is to detect them," he says.

The Vermont 200 Mile Endurance Run is a timed 72-hour race up terrain that scales to an elevation gain of 30,000 ft., a feat of extreme marathoning that only the most fit of runners can even attempt. While the traditional marathon is a measured 26.21875 miles, ultramarathons have increasingly gained popularity throughout the world in recent years. These races push runners through grueling multiday events with great variability in weather and terrain, and often including course obstacles, such as elevation changes.

In order to prepare for this extreme event, Carl has lined up a number of successive challenges, including the Pittsfield Peaks 53 Mile Ultra-Challenge (June 14), the New Canaan TFL 100 K (62 mile) Run at the New Canaan High School Track (August 2), and the Hartford 26.2 mile Marathon (October 11). Carl also does shorter training runs near his home in New Canaan 5-6 nights a week after 10:30 pm, so he doesn't miss out on time with his family. He invites anyone who wishes to join Team TFL for his/her own race whether it's a 5K, marathon, triathlon or walkathon, they can contact him directly at [carlasker@sbcglobal.net](mailto:carlasker@sbcglobal.net). He also invites anyone to join him during his practice runs at night if they live nearby just send an email to the same email address.

#### **About Time for Lyme**

Time for Lyme is an organization dedicated to eliminating the devastating effects of Lyme disease and other tick-borne illness. Our mission is to prevent the spread of disease, develop definitive diagnostic tools and effective treatments, and to ultimately find a cure for tick-borne illness by supporting research, education, and the acquisition and dissemination of information. In addition, we will continue to act as advocates for Lyme disease sufferers and their families through support of legislative reform on the federal, state and local levels. For more information on our organization, please visit [www.timeforlyme.org](http://www.timeforlyme.org). For more information on the Vermont 200-mile Endurance Run, go to [www.newenglandultras.com](http://www.newenglandultras.com).