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# Press Release

## Attleboro High School Teacher's World Record Run Cut Short

### Students and Track Team Members Finished the Run for Martin Tighe. (Excerpts from CAROLYN THORNTON Providence Journal)

Attleboro, MA, April 29-30, 2005: City teacher Martin Tighe attempts to set a new World Record for the most miles run on a treadmill in a 24 hour time period.

His quest for another world record ended shortly after 6 o'clock and 40 miles into his run Friday evening, but Martin Tighe can hardly look back at the last two days feeling any sense of failure.

Hospitalized after getting just a quarter of the way into what was supposed to be a 24-hour treadmill run, the Attleboro High School Teacher and adjustment counselor may have fallen short of his record-setting goal, but he can consider his mission accomplished.

Because when Tighe stepped off that treadmill, his students jumped on and finished the job for him.

Program and others members of the boys and girls outdoor track teams that passed up the chance to compete at a state meet yesterday to help Tighe's cause -- rallied together and demonstrated that they understand the true meaning of Tighe's message when he encourages them each day to "Go the distance."

Tighe never envisioned his message having the impact that it did. "It really was extraordinary."

For additional information, visit [www.friendsofahstrack.netfirms.com](http://www.friendsofahstrack.netfirms.com) ,click on "[Go The Distance.](#)"

**FULL PRESS RELEASE, STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BELOW**

For Release 9 a.m. EDT, May 1, 2005

# Attleboro High students put best foot forward

When Martin Tighe's bid for a world record on a 24-hour treadmill run was cut short, students and track team members jumped on and finished the job for him.

01:00 AM EDT on Sunday, May 1, 2005

BY CAROLYN THORNTON

Journal Sports Writer

**ATTLEBORO, MA** -- His quest for another world record ended shortly after 6 o'clock Friday evening, but Martin Tighe can hardly look back at the last two days feeling any sense of failure.

Hospitalized after getting just a quarter of the way into what was supposed to be a 24-hour treadmill run, the Attleboro High School adjustment counselor may have fallen short of his record-setting goal, but he can consider his mission accomplished.

Because when Tighe stepped off that treadmill, his students jumped on and finished the job for him. The teenagers -- some of them part of the school's alternative Network.

Program and others members of the boys and girls outdoor track teams that passed up the chance to compete at a state meet yesterday to help Tighe's cause -- rallied together and demonstrated that they understand the true meaning of Tighe's message when he encourages them each day to "Go the distance."

"He's been inspiring," said Stephanie Burt, the ninth-grader who came up with the idea for the students to run the final 120 miles in Tighe's honor. "I wanted to get up there. I wanted to help him finish."



Tighe never envisioned his message having the impact that it did.

"Obviously, I was extremely disappointed about the fact of not being able to complete the run," said Tighe, still a little lightheaded and suffering from a "banging headache" when reached at home last night. "However, to have seen what happened (yesterday) morning with the track team and the people in the community coming to cheer them on. That wouldn't have happened if I hadn't dropped out. It really was extraordinary."

### **Unusual endeavors**

The 24-hour treadmill record is just the latest of many crazy endeavors Tighe has undertaken. The 47-year-old Providence resident, who originally hails from Manchester, England, has scaled some of the most difficult peaks in the Himalayas, reached the summit of the highest mountain in the Atlas range in Morocco and kayaked the white waters of Europe and North America.

He turned to ultra-running in recent years, despite having 15 pins and two plates in his feet after breaking both ankles in a climbing accident several years ago.

Enduring temperatures that dipped to minus-25 degrees and traversing shifting ice that covered the Arctic Ocean, Tighe won the inaugural North Pole Marathon in April 2003.

He turned that adventure, which he prepared for by running on a treadmill in an ice cream freezer, into a project for the Network Program. The students studied some of the major issues confronting the Arctic region and even helped arrange Tighe's travel arrangements.

After a discussion with one of his students about the 24-hour treadmill record, Tighe decided to try to break the current mark of 153.76 miles, set by New Yorker Christopher Bergland April 29-30 of last year in Greenwich Village, and again make his quest part of a class project.

He chose the theme "Go the Distance," hoping to raise awareness about the increasing dropout rate in the country, an issue that is of particular concern to the Network Program, which provides an alternative learning environment for students who have had difficulty operating in a traditional classroom.

In preparation for the run, Tighe went for the 12-hour record on March 19, setting a world mark of 85.83 miles and breaking three other records along the way -- for 50K (3:44:48), 50 miles (6:06:19) and 100K (7:39:31). (Those records are still pending approval by Guinness.)

### **Scary moments**

His attempt at the 24-hour record began Friday at noon, on a NordicTrack treadmill stationed outside principal Jackie Proulx's office.

Until school let out at 1:50 p.m., Tighe had a cheering section 1,900 strong, with students shouting words of encouragement as they passed him in the lobby on their way to and from lunch.

"We had a very long, detailed plan from 0 to 160 miles, which was his goal," said Bruce Garber, a friend of Tighe's who served as the project manager.

Tighe periodically snacked on fig newtons and did his best to stay hydrated, occasionally slowing to a walk to eat a sandwich.

With the exception of some equipment problems that forced Tighe to switch treadmills after about 4 or 5 miles, things were going very well at first, according to his wife Marcia.

Tighe was right on schedule -- actually slightly ahead of schedule -- when he began to experience some intestinal problems at about 5 p.m.

Prone to an upset stomach when he's done other long distance events, he didn't think anything of it, but by 6 o'clock, Tighe began feeling nauseous.

When the urge wouldn't pass, he ran to a back room and tried to vomit, thinking it would make him feel better.

But while he was doing that, Tighe passed out for several minutes.

"It took a while to get him back and he couldn't stay with us," said Marcia Tighe. "He kept passing out. It was very scary."

Tighe was rushed by ambulance to Sturdy Memorial Hospital, where he underwent a battery of tests.

Everything came back normal, leading doctors to believe that Tighe's body simply shut down from the overexertion.

### **Show of support**

Released from the hospital at about 11 p.m. Friday, Tighe went home to rest.

Meanwhile, the students carried on. The team challenges that were being held on two other treadmills continued through the evening.

Kelly Cronin -- a physical education teacher at Attleboro, who also coaches winter and spring track with Tighe -- was impressed to see some of her students, who really don't have any running experience, join in.

"These are kids who are normally the first ones out the door," she said.

Even members of the rival Bishop Feehan High track team came out to support the project.

After an improvisational comedy team called SOTP (Speed Of Thought Players) performed shortly after 11, everyone decided to go home for the night.

Even though there would be no record to celebrate, the organizers decided that the many festivities planned for yesterday morning would go on as scheduled.

Then, as Network coordinator Kathy Vespia was giving student Stephanie Burt a ride home late that night, Burt turned to her and said, "Are we going to finish the miles for him?"

That simple question set the ball in motion. By yesterday morning, a team of Network Program students had assembled back at the school ready to finish the job their counselor had started.

Since Tighe had completed 40.468 miles before dropping out, they would need to run another 120 miles in order for him to meet his goal.

An ambitious task, but soon the Network students had reinforcements.

Already on the bus ready to go to the Massachusetts Division I Relays in Peabody, Mass., the boys and girls track teams decided to forgo the meet and join their classmates on the treadmills.



"For a lot of these kids, it was their last year of being able to compete in such a high quality competition, so for them to have done that was unbelievable," said Tighe, who briefly stopped by the high school yesterday morning before going for an electrocardiogram . "Oh God, when I saw that . . . The whole track team had all three treadmills going, and the kids were going as fast as they can. It was phenomenal. Seeing all the kids screaming and being extremely supportive, it really was quite an emotional moment."

For almost five hours, they took turns running. By approximately 1 p.m., the 120 miles were completed.

Burt, student Steve Kalil and Tighe's oldest daughter, Hannah, ran the final 3 miles.

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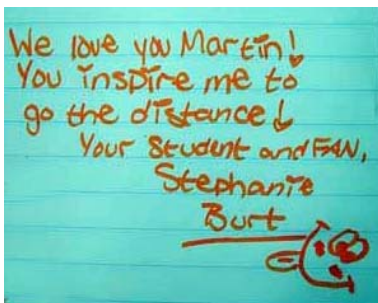
"I really wanted to help and just be a part of it," 9-year-old Hannah Tighe said. "If my father can go the distance, I can, too."



Once his body has recovered from this latest ordeal, Tighe says he may consider attempting the world record again.

For the time being, he will revel in the satisfaction of knowing he helped transform a community.

"The collaboration of a small community that this project created, being able to impact such a group of people for one cause was great," he said. "And obviously, it would be nice to see more of this going on. The power of students and the power of adults working together, working for a common cause, really can create changes and influence young minds."



Note by Stephanie That Started the Rally

Updates on the "Go the Distance" project can be found at <http://www.friendsofahstrack.netfirms.com> ,click on "Go The Distance."