



Bill Bellissimo takes his turn at the CrunchTime! Rowathon

### Habit of compassion

Bellissimo founded CrunchTime!, a leader in cost control software for the food and hospitality industry, in 1995. But years earlier his friend and colleague, Bob Watson, had introduced him to Children's Blood Donor Center. Watson was one of the hospital's earliest blood platelet donors and even won the Most Platelet Donations title in the Guinness Book of Records. Inspired by Watson's example, Bellissimo made donating blood a personal habit. He also discovered extra inspiration at Children's when he was beginning his company and needed an antidote to a stressful start-up.

"I'd sit in Children's lobby seeing sick kids and watching a whole institution devoted to helping them get well—it just put everything into perspective," he says. Though he didn't have children of his own at the time, he recently became the father of twin boys. "When you see children, so innocent and precious, it doesn't matter if they are yours or someone else's—you want to do anything you can for them."

Nowadays, Bellissimo encourages his staff to donate blood regularly, part of a "work hard, play hard, give back" corporate culture. When he installed a rowing machine in the CrunchTime! recreation room several years ago, employees began using it for exercise breaks. Then software engineer Adam Buggia had a better idea—a day-long, company-wide rowing competition to collect pledges for charity. Choosing the beneficiary—Children's Blood Donor Center—was easy. The first Rowathon, in 2008, raised \$4,000, and the company never looked back.

### Pulling together

For the fourth annual Rowathon on April 7, 2011, Buggia and his co-workers established a Facebook page and used

Coming through in a

# Crunch

**Bill Bellissimo, president of CrunchTime! Information Systems, Inc., knows how to enhance a workplace environment with camaraderie, community service and friendly competition. Four years ago, he and his employees created an annual fundraiser, the CrunchTime! Rowathon, which has generated nearly \$30,500 to benefit Children's Hospital's Blood Donor Center.**

personalized fundraising pages provided by Children's to accept online donations. Thirty-three rowers of all ages, sizes and fitness levels signed up for 15-30 minute slots. A white board posted individual times and distances below a headline, "Do you think the well-being of children is important? Row harder!" Non-rowers served refreshments and cheered participants. To track the team's progress, CrunchTimers hooked the rowing machine

### "Do you think the well-being of children is important? Row harder!"

to a computer and plasma TV screen, and created special software that "talked" to the rowing machine. The screen displayed the cumulative meters and converted them to miles—and to the estimated number of end-to-end boneless chicken breasts. (Chicken is a food industry staple, and, well, yes, one meter=4.921 pieces.) Action grew heated as Bellissimo took his second slot of the day and managed to beat a previous colleague's time.

### Crossing the finish line

By the end of the day, Bellissimo and his CrunchTimers tallied their results: 172,122 meters rowed, equaling more than 847,000 boneless chicken breasts. Pulling together, they raised \$11,808 for Children's—and had a great time doing it.

*You can turn almost any hobby or sport into a way to raise funds to help Children's patients. Get your own company, family or school group involved by calling (617) 355-6890, or visit [childrenshospital.org/fundraisers](http://childrenshospital.org/fundraisers).*