

NEWS RELEASE

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University of Saint Mary to Host Kansas City National Wheelchair Basketball Association Team

Exhibition Basketball Match-up Kicks Off USM Student Fundraiser, Tower Power 2005

7 p.m. Monday, Feb. 7

(Leavenworth, Kan.)— University of Saint Mary students kick off the charity fundraiser Tower Power 2005 with a roll of thunder. At 7 p.m., Monday, Feb. 7 in Ryan Sports Center, USM will host an exhibition basketball contest with the Kansas City Thunder, a National Wheelchair Basketball Association (NWBA) Division II team. All proceeds will benefit the Leavenworth division of Faith in Action Friendly Visitors, a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation dedicated to alleviating the isolation and limitation of homebound citizens, primarily the elderly. Admission is \$3 for adults and \$2 for children 12 and under. A portion of concession sales will also be donated to Faith in Action. Ryan Sports Center is located on the northwest side of campus at 4100 South 4th Street in Leavenworth, Kan. Call 913-758-6165 for more information.

Tower Power is a week-long annual event sponsored by the University of Saint Mary Student Government Association (SGA). Every year SGA hosts Tower Power as a week packed with fun activities to raise money for a local charity in need. Last year SGA donated more than \$4,000 to the Alliance Against Family Violence. This year, SGA selected Faith in Action Friendly Visitors to create student and community awareness about the growing difficulties homebound citizens face daily. The Faith in Action Friendly Visitors Program in Leavenworth provides services such as transportation; shopping; friendly visits; telephone reassurance; housekeeping; chores; and bill paying for the elderly. Call 913-651-1407 to learn more.

This year's wheelchair basketball game, sure to be unlike any basketball challenge you've ever seen before, will be the first major 2005 Tower Power event. A total of eight teams, six from the Leavenworth/Lansing community, and two from University of Saint Mary (a student team and a faculty/staff team), will play approximately one-half of one quarter against the Kansas City Thunder pros. Quarters last about ten-minutes, so each team will play the Thunder for approximately five minutes apiece. Players must stay in their wheel chairs at all times.

Bruce Copeland, director of student activities and housing, believes the wheelchair basketball exhibition will be fun and educational. "This year with Tower Power, SGA really wanted to involve the community in some part of the week's activities. It was agreed that a wheelchair basketball exhibition game with the Kansas City Thunder just might be the vehicle to draw in the support of the community," Copeland said.

The Kansas City Thunder is part of the NWBA, a non-profit organization that is the nation's oldest and largest disability sports organization. Founded in 1948, the NWBA serves as the national governing body for men's, women's and youth wheelchair basketball in the United States. Call 913-762-7403 for more information about the Kansas City Thunder.

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