

## INTRODUCTION



- For people living with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) the number of opportunities to participate in exercise and fitness are limited. Much of the limitation comes from the fact that most exercise and fitness programs and events are not modified for people with mobility limitations.
- Research studies have shown that staying mobile and active with MS is one of the best ways to manage the symptoms of the disease.

- Research supports that staying active with MS improves mood and lessens fatigue.
- The purpose of this poster is to describe how to modify a triathlon for people with MS with the goals being: provide a safe setting for people with MS to exercise and improve motivation to stay active for people living with MS.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- The goals of the MS modified triathlon are:
  - Empower people living with MS to stay healthy and active
  - Create a safe setting for people with MS to succeed in ongoing modified sports.
- The immediate objective is to get people living with MS motivated to participate in exercise. The event is structured to help participants complete the MS modified triathlon.



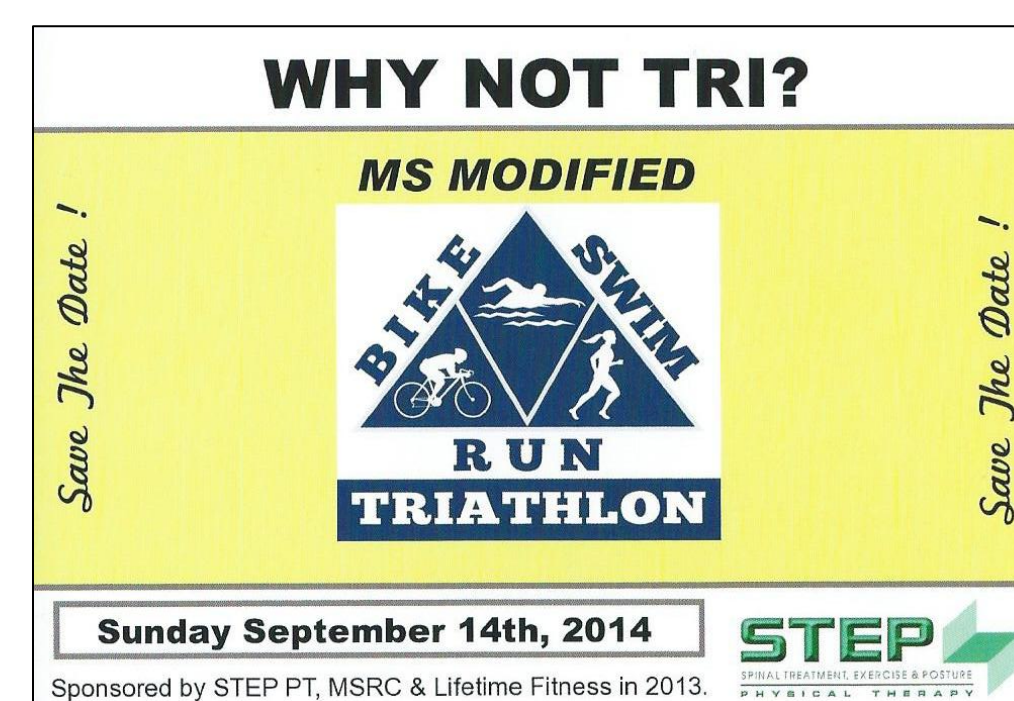
## PROGRAM DESIGN

- All participants signed a liability waiver and were required to have a medical release signed by their physician. There were 19 participants who registered for the event, 16 participants who started the event and 16 participants who finished the event.
- Participants were put into waves based on gender, ability and preferred start times. Some participants requested to change waves to better accommodate their abilities on the day of the event. This was not discouraged by event leaders.
- Volunteers were assigned in all areas of the triathlon including: entrances, registration, changing rooms, in the pool, stationary bicycles, treadmills, photography and food/water.
- Transportation was offered to participants who did not drive or have a car. The pool facility was approximately 5 miles from STEP Physical Therapy, where the biking and walking was held.
- The waves were timed to allow 30-45 minutes between events for "transitions" and rest.
- Participant distance for each event was tracked and recorded by volunteers.
- Family and Friends cheered throughout the event.



## FUTURE EVENTS

- The 2<sup>nd</sup> annual MS Modified Triathlon will be held in White Bear Lake and North Oaks Minnesota on Sunday September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2014
- Details to follow at [www.steppt.com](http://www.steppt.com)



## SWIM

- The swim portion of the event was held at a local fitness center that donated 2 lanes for the triathlon. Body ink for participant numbers and swim caps were provided.
- Thirty minute swim with continuous running time. Participants were able to rest as needed. The pool did not have a deep end which was an advantage for those with a fear of swimming. Distance was recorded by number of laps in yards; 1 lap = 25 yards.
- Life preservers, floating devices, fins, kick boards and any other assistance were allowed to help participants complete the swim portion of the event.



## BIKE

- The bike portion of the event was held indoors at STEP Physical Therapy. Pin-on participant numbers were provided at the start of the bike event.
- Thirty minute biking with continuous running time. Participants were able to rest as needed. The bike consisted of indoor stationary recumbent bikes. Distance was recorded in miles.
- Upper extremity bikes (UBE) were also available for participants with extreme leg weakness or spasticity. Straps were also used to secure a weak leg to the pedal to assist continuity.



## WALK / RUN

- The run portion of the event was held indoors at STEP Physical Therapy. Pin-on numbers were provided.
- Thirty minute run (which was modified to walk or run) with continuous running time. Participants were able to rest as needed. This portion was completed indoors on treadmills. Distance was recorded in miles.
- Three of the treadmills had the ability to provide body weight support; these treadmills were used by participants with a fall risk.



## VOLUNTEERS

- Volunteers were an important part of the event. Skilled healthcare providers including RNs and PTs volunteered their time to make it a safe event. Volunteers cheered and assisted as needed.

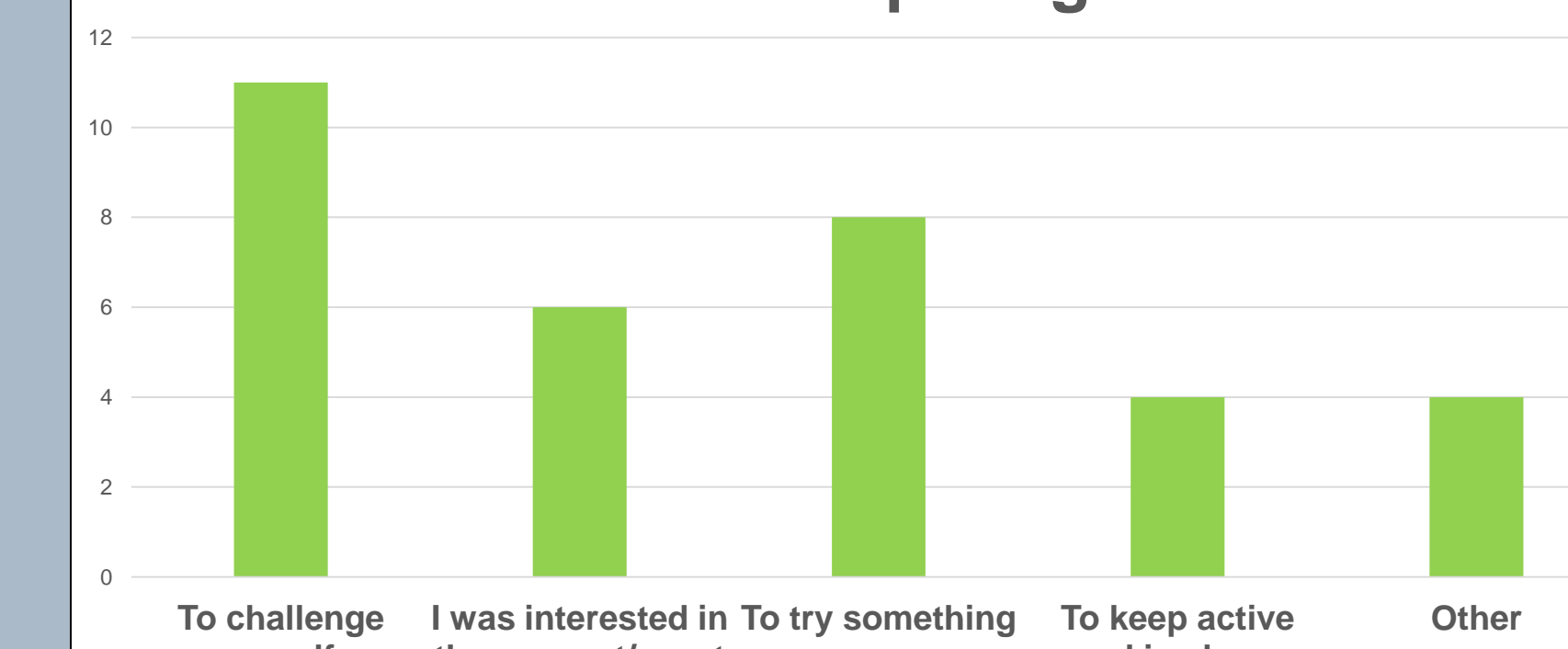


## SUMMARY

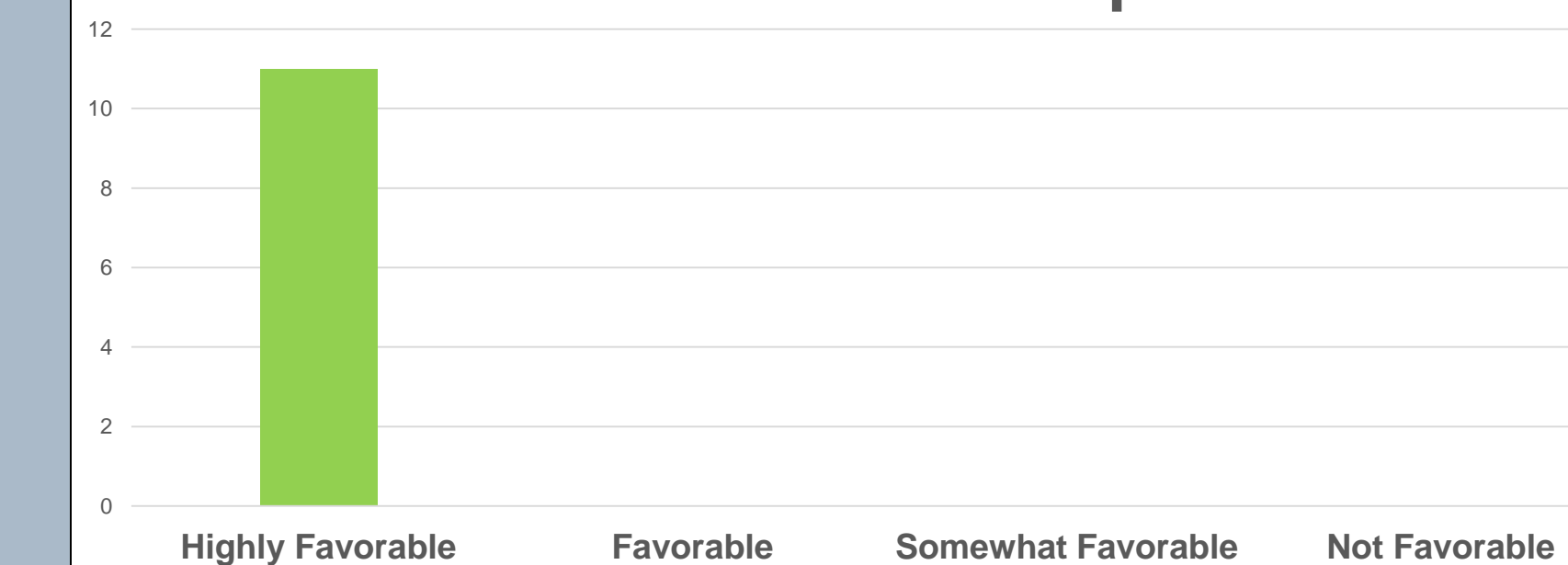
- A modified triathlon is a very effective and innovative way to help people with MS stay motivated and active in a safe setting
- By making modifications to the swim, bike and run (walk) as well as allowing rest as needed, each participant that started the event was able to successfully finish the event!
- Feedback related to the event was "highly favorable" and extremely positive from participants, cheering squad and volunteers.

## PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

### Reason for Participating in Triathlon



### Overall Triathlon Experience



"Thank you for the challenge and willingness to let us do it. I tri'd it and look forward to another one!" – Teresa M.

"What I liked the most was it was treated like my son's triathlons – very professional – it challenged me to perform and really step out of my boundaries." – Jim S.

"Thank you so much for the event. I had a great feeling of accomplishment afterwards." – Robert E.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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