

## Dr. Ron Kirk Gets America to "Straighten Up"

DYNAMIC CHIROPRACTIC'S 2007 PERSON OF THE YEAR

Editorial Staff

Over the past several years, the "Straighten Up America" public spinal health promotion program has become familiar not just to chiropractors here in the U.S., but has now spread all over the globe.

Australia, England, Sweden, Cyprus and India have all embraced the wellness guidelines espoused in the Straighten Up concept. In fact, Straighten Up has now been translated into eight languages with several more translations in production, and has been adopted as a central feature of World Spine Day.

The man behind the concept and its success is Ron Kirk, MA, DC. Dr. Kirk's list of contributions to the profession is long and distinguished. He has served on the Public Education Committee

of the U.S. Bone and Joint Decade since May 2006 and also serves on the World Health Organization's Network of Experts for Reduction of Stress in the Workplace and the World Federation of Chiropractic's Public Health Committee. He has been spearheading the global efforts to promote World Spine Day in collaboration with the U.S. Bone and Joint Decade and the Global Bone and Joint Decade.

In October 2006, Dr. Kirk coordinated and served as the master of ceremonies for the national launch of Straighten Up America/World Spine Day in Washington, D.C. The national launch featured leaders of the U.S. and Global Bone and Joint Decade, The American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons, the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, the U.S. House of Representatives, the Department of Health and Human Services Wellness Centers, the Association of Chiropractic Colleges, the American Chiropractic Association, Para-Olympic champion athletes and elementary school children.

Additionally, Dr. Kirk is a professor of health promotion at Life University. He teaches classes and coordinates the Life Center for Seniors, a lifelong learning health promotion community housed on the Life University campus. In addition to his membership in five academic honor societies, Dr. Kirk has authored numerous articles on health promotion and a chapter on spinal health in *Chiropractic and Health Promotion* by Meridel Gatterman. His current project is a chapter on posture for *Spinal Kinesiology*, to be published in 2008.

Dr. Kirk works closely with national and international partners to facilitate the development of numerous public service spinal health promotion Web sites and cost-free health promotion materials. The following is a timeline of Straighten Up's highlights over the past three years:

- Sept. 2004: Seed and Delphi Panels create and refine the Straighten Up America Exercise Module and Lifestyle Recommendations.
- Nov. 2004: The Congress of State Chiropractic Associations endorses Straighten Up America and presents it at the COCSA Convention in New Orleans.
- Jan. 2005: U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson commends Straighten Up developers for "leadership in the field of spinal health."

- March 2005: Straighten Up is presented to the ACC presidents, clinic directors and deans in a research platform presentation at the ACC-RAC Conference.
- May 2005: Straighten Up plenary and research presentations are made at the WFC/FCER Conference in Sydney, Australia.
- Oct. 2005: Straighten Up is presented at the U.S. House of Representatives Wellness Center and the U.S. Bone and Joint Decade meeting at the National Institutes of Health.
- Nov./Dec. 2005-2007: Straighten Up is presented at the APHA Annual Meeting.
- Jan. 2006: ACA and the NBCE contribute significant financial support for Straighten Up.
- Feb. 2006: Straighten Up public service Web sites ([www.straightenupamerica.org](http://www.straightenupamerica.org) and [www.chirotoolboxstraightenupamerica.org](http://www.chirotoolboxstraightenupamerica.org)) are launched as a collaborative effort by COCSA and Life University.
- March 2006: ACC presidents formally endorse and pledge significant financial support for Straighten Up. The program is presented at the Symposium on Natural Fitness 2006.
- May 2006: Straighten Up is presented at the Healthier U.S. Fitness Festival 2006, sponsored by the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports. Straighten Up also is presented at grade schools across the U.S. in collaboration with the Always Play Fair Sportsmanship Initiative.
- Oct. 2006: The Global and U.S. BJD adopt and promote Straighten Up as its principal spinal health promotion program. The WFC endorses Straighten Up as its principal spinal health promotion program.
- Jan. 2007: Straighten Up is presented as an invited BJD e-lecture.
- Feb. 2007: Straighten Up is presented as the keynote address for the WHO Occupational Health Workshop and Round Table Discussion in Bangalore, India.
- May 2007: Straighten Up is presented at WHO Occupational Health and Child and Adolescent Health and Development Cluster in Geneva. It also is presented at the WFC/FCER Conference in Portugal.
- Oct. 2007: Celebration of World Spine Day produces a live global interview on CNN Español and a local NBC interview on Kansas City's KSHB. Straighten Up Sweden and Cyprus are launched. The British Chiropractic Association launches a new Straighten Up U.K. Web site, [www.straightenupuk.org](http://www.straightenupuk.org). Straighten Up is presented at the Korean Legislative Symposium, bolstering efforts to legalize chiropractic in Korea.
- Dec. 2007: Straighten Up serves as a keynote theme for the WHO Worker Health Workshop in Bangalore, India.

Dr. Kirk's work doesn't stop there. Currently, he is coordinating cross-cultural forward-head-posture research in collaboration with international partners and the Occupational Health Cluster of the WHO and the Child and Adolescent Health and Development Cluster of the WHO in Bangalore, India and Marietta, Ga. In conjunction with the latest Straighten Up initiative in India, Dr. Kirk also is facilitating development of an inaugural model occupational health plan for Bangalore, a city of 7.5 million people, as well as the surrounding region. This inaugural occupational health planning project is being conducted in partnership with the Indian Ministry of Health and Welfare and the WHO South East Asian Regional Office.

The Straighten Up program is well-positioned for continued national and worldwide success, and Dr. Kirk continues to play a significant role. For his ongoing efforts to further the chiropractic profession and promote the value of spinal health, we honor Dr. Ron Kirk as our 2007 Person of the Year.

DECEMBER 2007