



A Homecoming

**Augie Nieto
returns to
Life Fitness,
the company
that he created**

By Nancy Murray Young

September 16 was a warm and sunny day in Franklin Park, Illinois, when Augie and Lynne Nieto arrived at the Life Fitness factory there.

It had been nearly 16 years since Augie, the cofounder and former chief executive of the company, had last entered the building, which had been its headquarters when he served as president.

Augie stepped down in 2000, when the company was acquired by the Brunswick Corporation (NYSE: BC). In March 2005, he was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), a muscle-wasting condition also known as Lou Gehrig's disease. Since then, he and his wife, Lynne, have launched and directed Augie's Quest, which, thus far, has raised more than \$50 million to fund research to find a cure for ALS.

Augie's Bash, one of the principal fundraisers for the Quest, takes place each year during IHRSA's Annual International Convention & Trade Show.

The recent Franklin Park homecoming coincided with another item on Augie's agenda. A member of the California Coast Chapter of the Young President's Organization (YPO), a global leadership community, he'd made plans to attend the group's annual meeting in Chicago. "I've missed the Retreat for most of the past eight years due to the difficulty of traveling," he explains, "but since we'd decided to go to Chicago, my former home, we just made it happen." →



It was great to see Chris Clawson in his *element*. I knew, back in 1994, when I hired him, that he'd evolve into a great leader, but he's truly exceeded my expectations! And he's done so with grace, hard work, and humor.” —AUGIE NIETO



Augie's visit was emotional and inspirational. He continues to demonstrate the leadership and determination that was evident during his time with Life Fitness. He challenged and supported us both professionally and personally, for which I'll always be grateful.” —BARB NELSON, DIRECTOR OF DISTRIBUTION AND LOGISTICS, A 29-YEAR EMPLOYEE



In conference: front, from L., Lynne and Augie Nieto, Chris Clawson

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Augie's visit to Life Fitness was filled with smiles and emotions ... and expressions of love and gratitude. His inspiration and passion, not only for Life Fitness, but also for the entire industry, both past and present, has generated an endless ripple effect. Life Fitness, as well as the industry, are eternally thankful.”

—SCOTT ROGALA, DIRECTOR OF SALES, A 22-YEAR EMPLOYEE





I have a huge sense of pride, and also awe, for the company that Life Fitness is today. Being part of creating it was one of the most rewarding things I've done in my life, up until launching this fight to find a cure for ALS. Overall, the experience of coming back to Life Fitness was simply wonderful!"

—AUGIE NIETO

The visit to Life Fitness' manufacturing plant wound up being added to the Retreat's schedule of activities, and several YPO-ers accompanied the Nietos on the tour.

"The morning started out with a great presentation from President Chris Clawson chronicling the history of Life Fitness, sharing some 'Augie stories,' and describing the impact that Augie's had on Chris' life," says Lynne. "It was a great opportunity for the members of Augie's Retreat to gain a better understanding of his business life."

As the visitors moved on to the plant's assembly area, about 35 employees who'd worked with Augie when he was president "were standing there clapping and welcoming Augie back," Lynne reports. "We spent about an hour there, touring around, and, as we did so, many employees came up to tell Augie how much he'd meant to them—both personally and professionally."

The group also had the chance to explore the Augie Nieto Fitness Center, the product showroom that was dedicated to Augie several years ago.

"Although I see many Life Fitness faces at the IHRSA convention each year, there were so many others I was able to get to see and visit with," says Augie. "I was touched by the current and former employees coming up to me to share their memories of our interactions when I was at the helm of Life Fitness. It was also great to see the Augie Nieto Fitness Center for the first time.

"As you can imagine," he says, "this was a *very* emotional return for me."

The 12th annual Augie's Bash will take place this year on March 10 at the JW Marriott hotel during IHRSA's 36th Annual International Convention & Trade Show in Los Angeles. —

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I've never met a more passionate man or someone more willing to share success with others. Augie expects greatness from everyone, loathes excuses, rewards results, and always has time for friends. He's always been an inspiration to everyone he encounters. Augie continues to demonstrate that he's truly a force of nature, a man who refuses to yield to anything that keeps him from his goals!"

—CHRIS CLAWSON, PRESIDENT