

Guide To Good Health

Annual Acoustics For Autism Event Benefits Area Youth

BY KAREN GERHARDINGER
MIRROR REPORTER

Like most teens, Dan Dowling-Bruce likes watching football and basketball games, listening to music and socializing.

The 18-year-old Sylvania Southview High School senior now can add equine leader to his resume, thanks to a grant from Project iAm.

The nonprofit organization gave Dan a scholarship for six months of horse therapy at Serenity Farm in Luckey, said his mother, Dee Dowling.

At first, the 6-foot, 5-inch teenager couldn't find a large enough helmet for his head — or the courage to go near horses. But the therapists at Serenity Farm adapted and customized a therapy program that allows Dan to work with horses without riding them.

Dan now grooms and leads the horses out in the field to jump over poles.

He also accompanies volunteers in taking mini horses to nursing homes and hospitals.

"He loves it. He's showing me pictures on the fridge about horses," Dee said. "But right now it's closed up for winter, as it's too cold."

On Sunday, March 8, Dee and Dan will be in Maumee for the Project iAm fundraiser Acoustics for Autism, which features four stages of live music throughout the day.

Each year, Project iAm provides scholarships for therapies and supplies not covered by insurance, said founder Nicole Khoury. Dan is one of many Northwest Ohio youths to receive scholarships over the past seven years.

"We went to Acoustics for Autism for support, but now I'm a volunteer for life," laughed Dee.

Dan was a 1-year-old when he was diagnosed with autism.

"We noticed a change. He



Dan Dowling-Bruce (left) and Kathleen Fincher, Serenity Farms volunteer, lead mini horse Thunder during an annual 2K/5K at Owens-Illinois in Perrysburg in 2014. Dan received equine therapy lessons at Serenity Farms, thanks to a scholarship from Project iAm. Acoustics for Autism, on Sunday, March 8 in Maumee, will raise funds for scholarships.

PHOTO COURTESY OF DEE DOWLING

went from saying words and pointing to things and being aware of surroundings to just shutting down," Dee said. "He would sit there sorting pencils and not make eye contact."

At first, Dee thought Dan would grow out of it — he was her first and only child. Instead, she got him into many early interventions.

"I believe this is what made him the wonderful man he is today," she said.

Dan now attends high school, works with Agility Angels and has speech therapy. Next year he will attend the Self Reliance Center at Toledo Hospital, where he will focus on academics and socialization.

Dan uses an iPad to communicate, whether ordering food at a restaurant or sharing thoughts about school with his mom. At Serenity, the specialists also use the iPad to share instructions and guide him in the equine therapy.

"Equine-assisted therapy has been instrumental in building Danny's confidence, improving focus, sequencing tasks, increase in social skills, attention to directions and great follow through, just to name a few. Danny is a joy to work with each week," said Serenity executive director and instructor Debra DeHoff. "Danny conducts all of his equine therapy lessons by ground lessons, and is able to use any of the eight horses at the farm with great success."

The therapy has been invaluable, and the support from Project iAm overwhelming, Dee said.

"When they gave the scholarship to him at Acoustics for Autism last year, I was in tears. Usually if you apply for funding, you go through hoops and applications and income eligibility," Dee said. With Project iAm, parents just need to **(continued on page 7)**

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Lucas County Residents Sought For Online Drug Use Survey

Lucas County is currently in the middle of an opiate and heroin epidemic. The number of county residents misusing opiate pain medication or

using heroin has increased tremendously in the past few years, say county officials.

Within the past six months, according to a 2013-

2014 Lucas County Health Assessment, 10 percent of adults have used medication that was not prescribed to them or ingested a dosage

higher than prescribed in order to reach a feel-good high.

As of November 2014, there had been 99 opiate-related deaths in Lucas County, the assessment found.

In order to better protect the health and well-being of county residents, the Toledo-Lucas County Health Department and the Mental Health & Recovery Services Board are collaborating on a communitywide survey to determine the level of awareness in our community. Survey results will be used to develop action steps to mitigate and reduce the use of opiates and heroin in Lucas County.

Input is crucial for the development of effective strategies to educate residents and to protect our community from the opiate and heroin epidemic. All survey responses will remain completely anonymous and only the combined

results will be reported.

To participate in the survey, visit www.surveymonkey.com/s/opiateheroin.

For further information, contact the Toledo-Lucas County Health Department at (419) 213-4018.

Rethink An Unhealthy Fear Of Healthy Fats

(Newsweek) — Think a no-fat diet is your guaranteed ticket to good health?

Think again.

According to Dr. Roger Clemens, past president of the Institute of Food Technologists, we each need a balance of fats and exercise to help our bodies function at their highest levels,

and to reduce the risk of diseases such as cardiovascular disease.

Dr. Clemens advises that there are five good reasons to include healthy fats in your diet:

1. *Energy.* Fat provides a highly concentrated form of energy. One gram of fat gives

you nine calories of energy, which is over twice that provided by carbohydrates or protein.

2. *Organs need a cushion.* A cushion of fat helps protect organs from injury and holds them in place.

3. *Cell structure.* Whether it is your hair, your skin or your eyes, fats make up part of the membrane that surrounds each cell of the body; and without those fats, the rest of the cell can't function.

4. *Immune function.* Without good fats in our diets, immune function becomes partially impaired and our bodies are susceptible to foreign invaders, such as bacterial and viral infections.

5. *Nutrient transport.* Vitamins A, D, E and K are fat-soluble vitamins and need fat to help the body transport, store and absorb them.

So don't fear the good fats found in fatty fish, nuts, seeds, olive oil and avocados — sources of healthy fats. Cutting them out of your diet completely will do more harm than good.

For more information about the Institute of Food Technologists, visit www.ift.org.

Chrys Peterson Joins ProMedica

Longtime Toledoan and former television news anchor Chrys Peterson is now contributing her talents to ProMedica. Peterson joined the health system as a consultant in late 2014.

One of Peterson's roles involves working with ProMedica's organizational development team as a certified facilitator in a new manager development program. In addition to training, she will play a key role in designing career enhancement programs for new and existing leaders across the organization.

"She is a dynamic facilitator and her fulfillment is found in fostering leadership through collaborative, exceptional team environments throughout

ProMedica," said Debra Ball, vice president of learning and service excellence for ProMedica human resources and organizational development.

Peterson is also fulfilling her first love of storytelling as a correspondent for ProMedica HealthConnect, a website offering timely health news and expert advice, inspiring patient stories from behind-the-scenes at ProMedica and community news.

"I am really happy to be a part of the ProMedica family and look forward to this exciting next phase in my career," said Peterson.

To connect with Peterson and watch her stories online, visit www.promedicahealthconnect.org.

Acoustics For Autism Event

(continued from page 6) share a story about why a son or daughter deserves it.

Now Dee is busy collecting gift certificates and helping to organize the silent auctions that will take place dur-

ing the March 8 fundraiser.

Donations will go directly to scholarships for area youth with autism, said Project iAm founder Nicole Khoury.

The Village Idiot will host music from noon to 2:00 a.m., Buster Brown's Lounge from noon to 11:00 p.m., and the Bier Garden Tent from 4:00 to 10:00 p.m. A silent auction and live music will begin at 1:00 p.m. in the auction tent.

Admission is free and all ages are welcome. Raffle winners will be announced at 7:00 p.m. For information, visit www.acousticsforautism.com.

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American Cancer Society Urges Ohioans To Share Personal Stories At Capitol

The American Cancer Society's 2015 Cancer Action Network Day at the Ohio Capitol will take place on Thursday, March 19 in Columbus.

Those living with cancer, their family members and their friends are urged to go to the Capitol to tell their personal stories to their state legislators. Ohio leaders must hear these stories in order to take appropriate action on cancer-related issues and programs.

Register at www.acscan.org/2015OHLobbyDay.

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