

Dan River Autism Awareness 5k
www.danriverautism5k.org

PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

DANVILLE, VA (APRIL 9, 2012) – April is Autism Awareness Month and our region is coming together by supporting the first annual Dan River Autism Awareness 5k.

According to national statistics, one in 88 children are affected by Autism, but in our region that number is even higher at roughly one in 70. One local parent said, "As a parent of an autistic child, I can say that any event that advocates on behalf of our local autism community can have tremendous benefits for the children and families who live and manage this disability everyday. It is long over due!"

The Dan River Autism Awareness 5k was established by a planning team comprised of parents, educators, and other advocates of individuals with autism. The goal of the event is to provide a common ground to meet others in the community whose lives have been touched by autism, and who are passionate about raising autism awareness.

The majority of the funds raised by the event will be used to endow a fund to support autism education in the Dan River Region. A portion of the funds raised will also be donated to Autism Speaks, a national autism advocacy and research organization.

Over 25 teams and 260 individuals have registered to participate so far, pledging over \$11,000 toward the event's fundraising goal of \$15,000. Registrations have been received from residents of Danville and Pittsylvania County, Martinsville and Henry County, South Boston and Halifax County, Eden and Rockingham County, and Yanceyville and Caswell County. Courtney Adams, behavioral director at Building Blocks Center for Autism, is a member of the event planning team. She said, "The response has been amazing so far! We are so pleased that this will truly be a regional event. We are excited to build on this in years to come."

The event is sponsored by Building Blocks Center for Autism, Center for Pediatric Therapies, Danville Regional Medical Center, The Hughes Center, and 19 other local businesses. Heather Showalter, autism program director at The Hughes Center, said, "An important goal at The Hughes Center is to provide ongoing community outreach to raise autism awareness in our area. It is critical that families, individuals, and service providers learn more about autism and how to access resources and supports that are greatly needed. The Dan River Autism Awareness 5K is an excellent way to help us accomplish our goal right here in our backyard. We are delighted to be a part of this outstanding endeavor."

The event kicks off this Saturday, April 14, 2012 with two fundraisers. Team Trevor is hosting a bake sale at Sam's Club in Danville, from 9am until everything is sold. Averett University and the Center for Pediatric Therapies are co-sponsoring Zumba for Autism. This zumbathon will be held from 11am to 2pm at the Averett University North Campus (707 Mount Cross Road, Danville).

The event itself is Saturday, April 21, 2012 on the Riverwalk at Dan Daniel Park in Danville. Sign in and registration will begin at 9:00am and the 5k will start at 10:00am. After the event, participants and community members are invited to attend the post-event celebration. Registration forms and other details are available online at <http://www.danriverautism5k.org> or by calling (434) 797-5530.

About Autism

Autism is a complex neurobiological disorder that inhibits a person's ability to communicate and develop social relationships, and is often accompanied by behavioral challenges. Autism Spectrum Disorders are diagnosed in one in 88 children in the United States. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have called autism a national public health crisis whose cause and cure remain unknown. (Source: <http://www.autismspeaks.org>)

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