

Dan River Autism Awareness 5k
www.danriverautism5k.org

PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

DANVILLE, VA (APRIL 14, 2012) – On Saturday, April 14, 2012, Zumba for Autism was held at the Grant Center at the Averett University North Campus. The three-hour zumbathon was co-sponsored by the Averett and Center for Pediatric Therapies.

"Our vision at Averett is to provide opportunities that are transformative for our region and beyond," Averett President Tiffany Franks said. "Knowing the toll that autism spectrum disorder takes on many families in our area, we are dedicated to making a difference through our autism initiative. Supporting the first Zumba for Autism event is another (fun) move forward in supporting local children and families affected by autism."

The zumbathon was organized by Kristen Houser Rojas, executive director of Center for Pediatric Therapies. Rojas said, "As I am both an occupational therapist and a certified zumba fitness instructor, hosting the zumbathon was a perfect opportunity to combine two passions, with the common goal of promoting autism awareness. Often individuals are inspired to become a part of a cause when they have a personal connection. The zumbathon was the perfect outlet to reach out to a variety of people, in hopes that as a community, we can collaborate on the most effective ways to support children and families affected by autism."

Zumba for Autism raised over \$400 for the Dan River Autism Awareness 5k through donations and t-shirt sales

Meanwhile, a few miles away at Sam's Club in Danville, a second fundraiser for the Dan River Autism Awareness 5k took place. Ashley Harris Dowdy and other members of Team Trevor raised over \$1,100 by selling homemade baked goods and autism awareness pins. Dowdy, whose son has autism, has recruited over 30 family members and friends to join Team Trevor. Dowdy said, "Team Trevor is walking in the 5k to raise autism awareness in the Dan River Region. We hope that the community will come together and help support area families affected by autism."

These two fundraisers kicked off the Dan River Autism Awareness 5k, which will take place 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. There is also a 1-mile course option. 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>)

About the Dan River Autism Awareness 5k

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. (Source: <http://www.danriverautism5k.org>)

###

For additional information about this press release, please contact Lauren Mathena at info@danriverautism5k.org or 434-836-5883