

Saluting Special Education

Rockin' the night away for special needs kids



Anna Molloy, the foundation's namesake.

By B. Scott Mohr
Editor

Anna's Celebration of Life Foundation, a nonprofit agency that provides life-enhancing gifts to children in Indiana with special needs, hosted its annual Rock the Night Celebration! Dec. 3 at The Atrium, and man did disc jockey Brian Morris have the place rockin'.

The evening started with a social and a silent auction before guests treated themselves to a delicious buffet dinner.

The fun really got started with a "horse race." Six contestants, each of whom was paired with a number on a dice, advanced down the "track" when their number showed up on two rolled dice.

Santa Claus was the fan favorite, but Nancy Lorenzano won by a nose.

Foundation Director Brad Haberman said the event would raise nearly \$50,000. "These people are generous. They really care about special needs children."

The foundation's namesake, Anna Molloy, daughter of Pete and Julie Molloy, died July 31, 2008. She was born with the genetic disorder geleophysic dysplasia, but Anna lived her life with a giant and courageous spirit.

She had an amazing sense of humor and kept everyone on their toes. Anna had an impact on everyone she came in contact with and had a great desire to make sure other kids with special needs were taken care of. Her spirit and her smile continue to be missed.



Myla Fogle, the 3-year-old daughter of Jessica Goodman and Brian Fogle, burned up the dance floor.

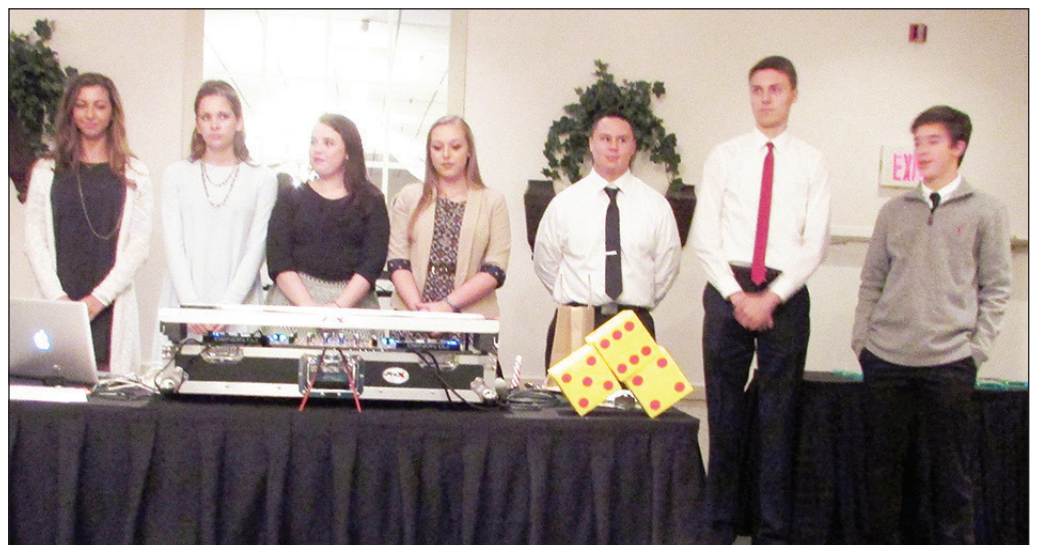


Disc jockey Brad Morris had The Atrium rockin'.



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There was a lot of whooping and hollering during the "horse race," which Nancy Lorenzano (third from left) won. The other contestants are (from left) Diane Himes, Santa Claus, Peter Henson, Don Hughett and Peter Molloy, Anna's brother.



During the awards part of the evening, the youth board of directors for Anna's Celebration of Life Foundation was honored for displaying excellence in advocacy, awareness and fundraising for children with special needs.

The honorees are (from left) Abby Gervasio, Maddie Faust, Margaret McCloskey, Annie Davey, Alex Martinez, Elijah Dougherty and Chad Ransburg.



Tom Bland was recognized for his fundraising efforts. A member of the Fraternal Order of Eagles, he annually coordinates a benefit motorcycle ride for the foundation.



Anna's Celebration of Life Foundation Director Brad Haberman, Diane Himes, state auxiliary president of the Fraternal Order of Eagles, and Pete Molloy, foundation board president, were among the nearly 500 people at the benefit.

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Saluting Special Education

Special Olympics changes lives

By Sherri Coner
Southsider Voice correspondent

During her high school years at Center Grove, Chelsea Davis never shared with anyone that she wanted to be on the gym floor with the other girls, playing volleyball.

Instead, Davis pretended that she was content with being the team manager.

Her fear of rejection was just too strong. "I didn't know if people would accept me," she said. "When some people see that you have a disability, they don't understand you. They might say, 'We don't want you on our team.'"

Soon after graduating, Davis, now 28, discovered Special Olympics.

Her time on the sidelines abruptly ended. "I always wanted to do sports," she said. "But I didn't know how other people would be."

Because Special Olympics provides year-round training and competitive opportunities in more than 20 sports, Davis has spent some of the last nine years dabbling in several athletic possibilities. Then she made decisions about which sports she enjoyed most.

For example, she tried basketball. "But that wasn't my sport."

Davis has gained some great friendships and made some wonderful memories while participating in swimming, volleyball, bowling and softball.

In addition to the sports, she is also involved with another segment of Special Olympics, the Athletic Leadership Program, in which athletes learn more about leadership and develop coaching skills.

"For the last four years I've been playing sports but I'm also teaching and tutoring other people," Davis said proudly.

Focusing on the positive has helped her to secure employment in a restaurant, and she volunteers at Riley Hospital for Children at IU Health.

Available to more than 5 million children and adults with mental disabilities, chapters of Special Olympics can be found in more than 165 other countries.

Such a busy calendar says a lot about how Davis now views herself. She more readily identifies her many skills and abilities.

Much like Davis, Travis Coy sadly sat on the sidelines of life for many years.

When his family encour-



Davis was chosen as the 2016 Special Olympics Johnson County Athlete of the Year.



Travis Coy enjoys playing cornhole.

to his parents that he was ready to move out of the family home.

"He decided all on his own that that was what he wanted," Coy said. "So now Travis lives in a group home in Greenfield. Since he moved there, that boy is never home. He is involved with all kinds of different things."

Like Davis, Travis Coy is employed. Also like Davis, his social calendar is busy.

Participating in Special Olympics at any age helps to erase those negative feelings of being excluded, fearful or awkward, Coy said.

When the environment is filled with celebration and joy, accomplishment and acceptance, great things tend to happen for all the athletes, just like they happened for her son, who has Down Syndrome.

"Special Olympics changes lives," Davis said. "It makes me feel good about myself."



Coy shows off his ribbon after finishing fourth in the state bowling tournament.



Chelsea Davis loves to play softball.

aged him to get involved in Special Olympics, he immediately began to bloom.

"Travis just loves to play sports," said his mom, Linda Coy of Franklin. "I am really proud of my son."

Because he can participate year-round in lots of different activities, Travis happily practices and competes in basketball, baseball, bowling and even cornhole tournaments.

"His dad and I are always on the sidelines, cheering him on," Coy said with a laugh. "And Travis has won a lot of medals too. He has at least 10 in all kinds of different sports."

Learning about the basics and rules involved with different sports has been good for Travis, Coy said. But he has also learned about good sportsmanship, how to get along with teammates and how to listen and follow instructions.

"He has grown up so much," Coy said. "It has all been so good for him."

Four years ago, Travis, 27, made a mature decision. He announced

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