**Henry to run 500 miles to raise money to fight hunger**

Joseph Henry has a heart for helping others. Beginning Feb. 9, he’ll use his feet and legs to prove it.

Henry, a weight-room manager at the Campus Recreation Center will run 500 miles from Washington, D.C., to the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada, to raise awareness for Universities Fighting World Hunger — and to raise $100,000 for the United Nations World Food Programme.

Henry will begin his Hunger 500 journey in front of the White House. Seventeen days, 500 miles and numerous university visits later, he will end his run at the University of Guelph, where he will attend the sixth annual Universities Fighting World Hunger (UFWH) Summit.

“I’m really just doing this to raise awareness for hunger, specifically the UFWH,” Henry says. “I went to the UFWH conference in Ontario last year, and they had a lot of mental health issues being addressed.”

**New Tourette’s clinic offers drug-free therapy for kids**

John Rowe was a typical 11-year-old boy. He loved to play sports, loved to hang out with his friends, and he was a pretty good student, too.

Then the tics started. He blinked excessively. His whole trunk jerked violently. He stamped his feet. He repeated phrases again and again. He began scratching his arm to the point that it bled. And the worst part — no matter how hard he tried, John couldn't control any of those behaviors.

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Occupational Therapist Jan Rowe is the coordinator of the new Pediatric Tourette’s Syndrome Clinic. The clinic specializes in comprehensive behavioral intervention for tics (CBIT), a non-drug treatment option for battling Tourette syndrome.

**B-ALERT: New emergency notice system now in place**

The University of Alabama at Birmingham switched to B-ALERT — a new, technologically advanced emergency notification system — effective Thursday Feb. 3.

B-ALERT enables the UAB Emergency Management Team to generate simultaneous voice calls, SMS text messages and e-mails to the entire campus during an emergency or severe weather situation that requires immediate communication. B-ALERT also is integrated with Facebook and Twitter.

More information is online at www.uab.edu/emergency. UAB’s primary website for emergency information.

**Why the switch?**

UAB’s primary concern during any emergency or severe weather situation is the safety of its students, faculty, staff and visitors. In keeping with that philosophy, the university wanted to take advantage of advances in technology.

**Registration**

All registration for the system is connected to your BlawerID. The registration form is online at www.uab.edu/BALERT. You always will be able to find a link to the registration form on the emergency information website. Make sure you are registered in the system with correct, up-to-date information.

**E-mail**

B-ALERT e-mails will come from the new UAB Emergency Management Team address: UABALERT@uab.edu.

All BlazerID-connected UAB e-mail addresses automatically are included in the new system; you will not be able to opt out of receiving these e-mails. If there are other e-mail accounts at which you would like to receive notifications, register those separately in the system.

**Text**

Register at least one SMS-capable mobile device with the B-ALERT system. Why? Because message delivery in an emergency is usually quicker via this kind of messaging. Any time you register a new SMS text device, you will receive a message allowing you to opt out of the service. Should you choose to opt out, which is not recommended, update your preferences through the registration form. Responding to the message will not complete the opting out process.

**Telephone**

Register your cell, office and home phone numbers in order to receive voice messages at all numbers during a crisis situation.

**Social media**

Follow B-ALERT on Facebook at www.facebook.com/UABALERT and on Twitter under the name UABALERT: www.twitter.com/UABALERT.

**More details**

If you already are registered with the existing UAB emergency notification system (eNotify), you received a confirmation text message during business hours Feb. 3 notifying you that you now are automatically registered for B-ALERT. Text messages from the system come to your cell phone or other handheld device from something called a short code; it is either 23177 or 63079. UAB also sent a full B-ALERT test message to all text, voice and e-mail
A new home for alumni  The newly opened UAB National Alumni Society House, located at 1001 13th St. South, houses staff offices for UAB Alumni Affairs and provides an excellent venue for alumni programming and events. The space will accommodate 200 to 300 people for luncheons, dinners, receptions and board and chapter meetings, and permit many events to be held on campus that had to be held elsewhere in the past. “The Alumni House also will be a symbol to our students of the viability of the National Alumni Society and will better enable us to show them how important it is to stay involved after graduation,” says Rebecca Watson, associate vice president for Alumni Affairs and Annual Giving.

To reserve space for a luncheon, dinner, reception, meeting or other event, e-mail Donna Owen at down@uab.edu.

UAB EAP luncheon to focus on healthy aging Wednesday

Guest speaker James McMinn will examine healthy aging during the UAB Resource Center Employee Assistance Program luncheon program at noon Wednesday, Feb. 9 in John N. Whitaker Building Suite 1104. McMinn will focus on the things to do to live a healthier life, regardless of age. His approach to wellness explores the mind/body/spirit connection and emphasizes prevention.

The free event is open to all UAB and UAB Health System employees. Attendees may bring a brown-bag lunch to this program.

Space is limited. Call 934-2281 to register.

Women’s Basketball, Cancer Center team for Pink Zone game

UAB Women’s Basketball and UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center will host the WBCA Pink Zone game for breast-cancer awareness at 8 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 10 in Bartow Arena. A silent auction will begin at 7 p.m. in the arena concourse, and breast-cancer survivors will be honored and recognized throughout the game. Proceeds from the silent auction will be donated to the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center’s Coach Gene Bartow Fund for Cancer Research, a fund that honors the legendary UAB coach and former athletic director. This past year’s auction raised more than $9,000 for cancer research at UAB.

Tickets to see the Blazers play the Tulsa Hurricanes can be purchased online at UABSports.com or by calling 975-8221. Coupons for free admission are available with purchase at Full Moon BBQ.

Pink Zone is a global, unified effort initiated by the Women’s Basketball Coaches Association to raise breast-cancer awareness on the court, across campuses, in communities and beyond. In 2010, more than $3.04 million was raised.

Quality measures for health care topic of annual symposium

When booking a hotel room or making a restaurant reservation, consumers can turn to rating services or consumer reports for information to help them make good choices. Not so with hospitals and health-care facilities; consumer reports for information to help them make good choices. Not so with hospitals and health-care facilities; but that’s changing. The topic of high-quality health care will be discussed during the annual Quality Symposium, co-sponsored by the UAB Department of Health Services Administration and UAB Medicine, from 8 a.m. to noon Friday, Feb. 18 in the Wynfrey Hotel in Hoover. Tickets are $50 and include a continental breakfast. Registration is available online at www.uab.edu/hsaregistry.

Traveling exhibit focuses on changing gender roles

The Alabama Museum of the Health Sciences will present “The Literature of Prescription: Charlotte Perkins Gilman and The Yellow Wallpaper,” a traveling exhibit from the National Library of Medicine. In the late 19th century, at a time when women were challenging traditional ideas about gender that excluded them from political and intellectual life, medical and scientific experts drew on notions of female weakness to justify inequality between the sexes.

Artist and writer Charlotte Perkins Gilman, who was discouraged from pursuing a career to preserve her health, rejected these ideas in a terrifying short story titled “The Yellow Wallpaper.” The famous tale served as an indictment of the medical profession and the social conventions restricting women’s professional and creative opportunities. The exhibit runs Feb. 14 though March 25 in the Lister Hill Library of the Health Sciences. The library is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and admission is free.

Event briefs

A new home for alumni The newly opened UAB National Alumni Society House, located at 1001 13th St. South, houses staff offices for UAB Alumni Affairs and provides an excellent venue for alumni programming and events. The space will accommodate 200 to 300 people for luncheons, dinners, receptions and board and chapter meetings, and permit many events to be held on campus that had to be held elsewhere in the past. “The Alumni House also will be a symbol to our students of the viability of the National Alumni Society and will better enable us to show them how important it is to stay involved after graduation,” says Rebecca Watson, associate vice president for Alumni Affairs and Annual Giving.

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UAB, McWane issue healthy challenge to area children

The title of the annual report released this past summer from the Trust for America’s Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation pretty much says it all: "F as in Fat: How Obesity Threatens America’s Future 2010.

Adult obesity rates increased in 28 states this past year, and childhood (ages 10-17) obesity rates also were on the rise. Alabama tied with Tennessee at No. 2 for adult obesity rates and ranked sixth nationwide in childhood obesity.

Numerous intervention programs are being developed to combat these alarming trends. UAB’s Center for Clinical and Translational Science and the Department of Nutrition Sciences has partnered with McWane Science Center and One Great Community to develop a unique effort to get kids moving.

The Healthy Change in Your Community Challenge, a competition for more than 120 area children ages 7-13 from the Birmingham metro area, began in October 2010 and will end in May. McWane Center recently hosted an overnight nutrition boot camp to educate participants and their families about fun in healthy eating and healthy, active lifestyles.

UAB’s Nutrition Sciences was asked to be involved with all aspects of the challenge and provide evidence-based nutrition information and behavior-change strategies to improve eating and exercise habits.

“We are providing the nutrition expertise and also measuring dietary changes and health outcomes as part of the project,” says Amanda Brown, Ph.D., director of the didactic internship and graduate program in clinical nutrition. “Community Challenge is an innovative way to promote healthy eating and physical activity in the community. McWane Center has wonderful healthy eating and healthy, active lifestyles.

Inge says. “This is a population that has a lot of family members with diabetes, and they can’t afford medication. They see firsthand how important it is, even though we try to make these exercises fun.”

Inge conducts monthly meetings and sends twice-weekly e-mails to share recipes and discuss healthy concepts with each of the groups. She also provides guidance on ways to incorporate the strategies in their projects.

Some of the projects include brainstorming recipes the kids can help their parents make at home and fun family exercises that require little or no equipment.

“It’s all about doing what we can to strengthen the kids’ connection to healthy concepts and get them more personally involved with health and wellness,” Inge says.

It’s also a way to get children to share their knowledge and excitement with their parents. Brown says. If children are engaged, and they have their parents’ encouragement, they will work to change their behaviors.

“Children can be a powerful model for change, especially when they’re excited about something,” Brown says. “Involving the parents increases the chances that the information that’s learned and the behaviors you’re trying to enforce will become part of their daily lives. Also, community participation in the development of health and wellness programs greatly increases the likelihood that successful changes will be made.”

The Healthy Change in Your Community Challenge will have several more meetings and events before wrapping up in May with an awards dinner, during which each group will receive prizes ranging from $100 to $1,000 to keep their project going during the next year.

Traineeship important

Inge is UAB’s “boots on the ground” for the project. Brown says, and she will continue to have input in the development of these follow-up meetings.

Inge came to UAB for dietetic internship opportunities, to earn a master’s degree and complete a traineeship.

The dietetic internship program, which Inge completed in 2010, began in 1964. The program provides the supervised practice portion of the training for registered dietitians before they take a national certification exam.

“The students complete 1,200 hours of supervised practice in different areas of nutrition, including clinical nutrition, public health nutrition, and research. They are supervised by registered dietitians who have experience in specific areas,” Brown says. “They practice nutrition therapy in community and public health settings, and in clinical inpatient and outpatient settings, including pediatrics, adult and elderly adult care. They also complete training in food-service system management.”

The master’s program in clinical nutrition is geared toward individuals who are registered dietitians or have a nutrition background. The program gives students advanced training in biochemistry, statistics and research study design so they have career opportunities in advanced clinical and community settings, in academic medical centers as instructors or clinical researchers, or in a health sciences doctoral program. Specialty practice areas within dietetics, including pediatrics or nutrition support, require a master’s degree.

Registered dietitians like Meme are the nutrition experts,” Brown says. “In clinical, community and wellness settings, the registered dietitian has the science background and clinical and community expertise. The program provides the supervised practice portion of the training for registered dietitians before they take a national certification exam.”

UAB offers traineeships like the one at McWane Center as part of the Master’s Degree in Clinical Nutrition Program. Inge has been given the opportunity to shape the Healthy Change program as she sees fit while learning other vital skills, including managing budgets.

“I have much help from Shantice Allen, Ph.D., who is the program manager in the School of Public Health and the program director for One Great Community,” Inge says. “And I’ve received tremendous support from Dr. Brown and the people at McWane Center. There are so many things I have to follow from a budgetary aspect, and there are many groups involved in this initiative. I can engage them for input and shape the program to how I think it should be. I feel like everything I’ve done has more than adequately prepared me for what’s ahead.”

B-ALERT

Continued from page 1

addresses and numbers in the system.

Voice calls originate from B-ALERT at 205-975-8000. Store these numbers in your phone and program them all as B-ALERT so you will recognize them as the official source of UAB emergency and/or severe weather information.

General information

Remember that during an emergency situation, UAB will also communicate as needed by:

• Posting information on the main emergency information website at www.uab.edu/emergency
• Updating the UAB Severe Weather & Emergency Hotline at 205-934-2165

One more reminder

For more information on UAB’s policies and procedures during any emergency or severe weather situation, visit the UAB Emergency Information Web page at www.uab.edu/emergency. The page also contains links to internal and external emergency support and information resources.

February 7, 2011 UAB Reporter 3
Lister Hill test-pilots program to house campus research

G raduate student Mark Bolding is heavily engaged in vision research. Specifically, he’s working on a diagnostic tool for schizophrenia based on eye movements. As does any researcher, he wants a safe place to store his data and share it with other investigators.

Bolding was surprised when he began searching for one central repository on campus where he could do just that.

“There was nothing available,” Bolding says. “Data is one of our more valuable resources here. It is our currency.”

Bolding and Liz Lorbeer, associate director for content management at Lister Hill Library, decided to construct a vault for this information and recently were awarded a $5,000 grant to do so. The Express Library Digitization Award from the Southeastern/Atlantic Region of the National Network of Libraries of Medicine is intended to enable libraries to digitize historical materials or a unique collection to increase its accessibility within and outside the institution.

The two have enlisted the expertise of John-Paul Robinson, an architect for UAB IT Research Computing, to create an institutional repository using open-source software to collect, share and preserve the intellectual properties of the School of Optometry.

The idea is to seamlessly connect the school’s data and knowledge to the greater global health and vision community by providing online access to images, data sets, streaming media, protocols, lab notes, article preprints, works in progress and brain-mapping data.

By distributing unique data resulting from scientific pursuits, sharing that intellectual knowledge and making it accessible to the global health community, it would make materials created at UAB immediately accessible on the Internet to students, researchers and consumers.

“If this were money instead of data, we wouldn’t be stuffing it under our mattresses and keeping it in the labs,” Bolding says. “There would be a vault on campus where you could take it, and it would be managed.”

Initially the repository will focus on openly sharing digital assets created by the faculty and students of the School of Optometry and its Center for the Development of Functional Imaging. UAB’s School of Optometry was selected as an inaugural partner because of the broad range of disciplines that contribute to Vision Science, including visual psychophysics, neuroscience, computational vision and cognitive psychology.

While some ophthalmology departments have similar repositories for in-house users, few schools of optometry have such repositories, and there is little involvement from the optometry and vision-science community in university repositories. Lister Hill Library is a long-time member and supporter of the Association of Vision Science Librarians (AVSL), whose mission is to develop mechanisms for improving access to vision information. A repository of optometric materials would be a unique resource for the vision-health community.

NIH, NSF push availability

A database also would satisfy ongoing requirements by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Science Foundation (NSF) that research materials be made available publicly.

“The NIH has been a little more hard-nosed about it recently, and the NSF has said it’s going to make sure grants have this kind of statement or be considered incomplete,” Robinson says. “They’re saying you need to be thinking about this and ensure there is an institutional perspective.”

Lorbeer says some journal publishers no longer are accepting supplemental data — primarily because they don’t know how to subject it to peer review.

“You send them the bench notes with your published paper, the reviewers don’t know how to handle that information,” Lorbeer says. “They can’t tell how accurate it is. It’s left for an institutional repository open to the world for the scientific community to recreate the results.

“Journals are linking to a repository with those data sets and bench notes, so you can make the experimental data open,” Lorbeer says.

It’s not impossible for researchers to get their hands on information they want, but the NIH and NSF intend to lower the barrier to those transactions by encouraging the creation of repositories.

“It’s not that you wouldn’t want to give someone a phone call, but often you want to be satisfied immediately and reach the broadest audience,” Robinson says. “If you have to answer every phone call and request from every junior researcher that might be interested in the results you published in a very popular paper, you’re going to become a clearinghouse rather than a researcher.”

Focus on research

Most researchers create their own platforms to store their data or enlist a graduate assistant to do it. But this attempt to become experts on hosting infrastructure turns focus away from research.

For the UAB pilot, Research Computing is building platforms that campus researchers can leverage to build their equipment portfolio and computational capabilities for high-end performance computing and a broad range of services.

They are hosting a computer and running experiments with different pieces of software to try and determine the best way to expose digital collections to the outside world.

The model under development is the same among others to assess their experiences.

“They’re all struggling with the same issue — we’re struggling with — to find the vehicle to load all of this information and be able to present it in a logical, easy and accessible way,” Lorbeer says. “You can load all of this data up, and it won’t mean anything if it’s not presented correctly.”

The design phase of the pilot grant began this past July. The setup phase began in the fall, and the group is in the beta test phase. They hope to have answers by the spring.

“I hope by the end of April we know what road we want to go down,” Lorbeer says. “Right now we have many to choose from.”
A Gulf oil spill: Five priority study areas advised

When Henry told members of the World Food Programme (WFP) and Auburn University. Since that time, the UAB School of Public Health, from The Sparkman Center for Global Health. Henry heard stories of the things people did to raise the profile of the UFWH and raise money for the WFP at the summit. He was especially impressed with one gentleman who had run three marathons in three consecutive days — a total of 78.6 miles.

The exposure assessment should obtain information that is as comprehensive as possible on exposure to the oil, dispersants and by-products. Seafood-safety research should assess near and long-term effects and clearly communicate results to affected communities.

Communication research should evaluate and compare communication and engagement methods to determine those most effective for disaster and disaster-preparedness research.

The rapid response framework should explore the development of protocols and procedures needed to deploy a rapid response research for future oil spills and other potential disasters.

The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences Gulf Workers Study, the Health Sciences Gulf Workers Study, the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences Gulf Workers Study, the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences Gulf Workers Study, the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences Gulf Workers Study, the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences Gulf Workers Study, the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences Gulf Workers Study, the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences Gulf Workers Study.
Kohler earns national award for excellence in mentoring

Navomi Chen visited the UAB School of Public Health in 2007 as a prospective master’s student. She didn’t know what to expect or whom she might meet.

Connie Kohler. Dr.P.H., professor of health behavior and director of graduate studies for the department, was the person to engage Chen and enlighten her on the virtues of a UAB public health master’s degree. Kohler familiarized Chen with the department and showed her research initiatives to the prospective student. But it was the way Kohler delivered the message that really struck a chord with Chen. She was warm, encouraging and passionate.

“I immediately felt at home,” Chen says. “Dr. Kohler’s friendliness and accessibility were key factors in my decision to attend UAB.”

And Kohler’s guidance as a mentor led to Chen nominating her for awards, including the Graduate School’s Dean’s Award for Excellence in Mentorship — an award Kohler earned in 2010. Since Chen put together the book of letters nominating Kohler for that award, she figured she should send it to the American Public Health Association (APHA), too. Because of that, Kohler recently was named a recipient of the APHA Student Assembly Excellence in Mentoring Award.

The award is given annually to senior public health academics or practitioners who take an active role in mentoring students and young professionals through regular contact, professional development, research support or joint publications.

“Dr. Kohler is more than an innovative researcher,” Chen says. “She shares freely of herself and takes a genuine interest in her students. When people ask how I am enjoying graduate school, I tell them that I am getting what I came for — and more — and that I owe my success in large part to Dr. Kohler.”

Engaging students

Kohler is not one to seek attention and recognition for her work, but she enjoys what she does and relishes the opportunity to engage students.

“I like teaching in the classroom,” says Kohler, who teaches two courses a year in health communication. “I have my good days and bad days at it, but I just discovered along the way that working with students one-on-one is a lot of fun.”

Kohler, a 27-year UAB employee, has mentored students extensively for the past 15 years, and she does admit to possessing an affinity for explaining things to other people.

“If somebody doesn’t know something, I like to explain it to them,” she says. “I just find that really rewarding. Even when I was a little kid I wanted to play school and be the teacher. It’s kind of showing off in a way I guess — I know something you don’t know, and here I let me tell it to you — but it’s also a social thing. I like getting to know the students. I probably spend more time than a lot of people getting to know them personally — not that that is the best way to do it; it’s just the way I am.”

Students admire the high academic standards Kohler sets for herself and them and how her teaching strategies often draw them into thoughtful and engaging conversations on health communications theory. And they are especially appreciative that she shows a willingness to engage them personally and get to know them.

That personal relationship was key to Angela Warren Baumann continuing on her path in school. Baumann, a fourth-year doctoral student in health behavior, was an excellent and diligent student. She also was a mom-to-be in spring 2008 who was going to miss time while on maternity leave. Kohler worked with Baumann and enabled her to complete the requirements of a course during her leave so she could maintain her progress in the program.

“She was kind and compassionate in balancing the need to complete assignments in her course and realizing that I needed time to recuperate after just having a baby,” Baumann says. “I gained even more respect for Dr. Kohler during this semester because I realized she respected me as a whole person — one with responsibilities to school and family.”

Kohler believes helping students navigate issues like maternity leave is essential.

“As a mentor, you have to help students navigate more than just the professional aspects of things,” Kohler says.

Learning from others

Kohler says she has been the beneficiary of a mentor as well. In fact, she says Bill Bailey, M.D., professor of medicine in pulmonary, allergy and critical care, often crosses her mind.

“I worked in the Lung Health Center for several years early in my doctoral career, and I learned a lot from Bill Bailey in terms of research and how to treat people,” Kohler says. “He was a wonderful mentor.”

And because of that, Bailey was among those she thanked in Denver during the 2010 annual meeting of the American Public Health Association where she received the Student Assembly award. In fact, Kohler thanked Bailey and every student she has mentored in her career in a rhyme.

“I had to give a three-minute acceptance speech, and I didn’t know what to do,” Kohler says. “I wound up naming them in rhyme in order to thank them. And I didn’t miss anybody.”

Heart disease is more common, deadlier for older women

Heart disease is the No. 1 killer of women, and each year more women than men die from heart and cardiovascular disease without ever realizing they are at risk.

“This involves a heart attack, a woman’s chance of not surviving the first year or having another heart attack is greater than a man’s,” says UAB cardiologist Alan Gertler, M.D. Preventing a heart attack, he says, is a critical objective.

Gertler says all women are at risk for heart disease, and the risk rises substantially as they age. “The incidence of heart disease among women overtakes men when they reach their late 50s, usually about five to 10 years after menopause,” he says.

Gertler says one reason could be that biological changes tied to menopause may cause a dip in good cholesterol, predisposing such women to clogged arteries. And though hormone-replacement therapy can reduce the symptoms of menopause, he says studies have produced differing results about whether or not it is beneficial for a woman’s heart.

Post-menopausal women are more likely than men to be obese and have diabetes that may contribute, too. “The primary risk factors, such as smoking, hypertension, diabetes, abnormal cholesterol or elevated triglycerides, hold true in women as they do in men,” Gertler says.

“However, we believe that diabetes and the metabolic syndrome tend to be more of an issue for women than men and account for the increasing number of women with heart disease.”

For optimum heart health, Gertler advises women of all ages to know their risk factors and change the ones they can. Learn more in this and other videos on heart health at www.uab.edu/news.

Women at risk

According to the American Heart Association:

• More than one in three female adults has some form of cardiovascular disease.

• 64 percent of women who died suddenly of heart disease had no previous symptoms.

• 23 percent of women ages 40 and older who have a heart attack die within a year; only 18 percent of men suffer the same fate. 284x709 to 759x1133

CAMPUS NEWS

Connie Kohler enjoys teaching Mike Taylor one-on-one. Kohler serves a mentor to Taylor, an advanced doctoral student in health education and promotion, — and he is grateful for her guidance.
Ignite your inner artist during 2011 ArtBLINK gala

Nineteen Alabama artists will converge on The Kirklin Clinic Saturday, Feb. 26 for ArtBLINK Gala 2011, benefiting UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center research and services.

Top Alabama artists, many either cancer survivors or caregivers, will create a masterpieces in 90 minutes while ArtBLINK attendees watch, and the art will be auctioned that evening by Guin Robinson and CBS 42’s Sherri Jackson.

“Ignite Your Inner Artist” is the theme for this year’s event that features artists Nall, Stephen Ardovino, Ahmad Austin, Xander Booker, Gary Chapman, Vicki Denaburg, Randy Gachet, Karen Graffeo, Lila Graves, Wyona Hamby, Bethanne Hill, Darius Hill, Joey Longoria, Frant Nagy, Amy Pfeifer, John Pleasant, Linda Ellen Price, Ricky Trione and Paul Ware.

The ArtBLINK Gala 2011 begins at 6:30 p.m.; dress is black-tie optional. Valet and deck parking are available. Affordable ticket prices range from $35 per individual, and tickets can be reserved online at www.uab.edu/artblink or by calling 934-1603. Guests will enjoy cocktail dining by B&A Warehouse and live music by Alabama Jazz Hall of Fame inductee Cleve Eaton and the Alabama All Stars.

Hosted by the Comprehensive Cancer Center Advisory Board, ArtBLINK supports cancer research and patient and family services. The UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center thrives on the generosity of the community and the determination of expert researchers, outreach professionals, nurses and doctors to make strides in preventing, screening and treating cancer. This year the gala will honor three of the UAB Cancer Center’s most longstanding and loyal supporters who each passed away in 2010: Judith Todd Abrams, Rita C. Kimerling and William M. Spencer H. Honorees for this year’s gala are advisory board members Pat and Jean Sullivan.


TOURETTE’S CLINIC

CONTINUED from page 1

"It was a vicious cycle," says Cindy Rowe, John’s mother. “He would have tics, become anxious about them and try to stop them, and that created more tics. To see him hurting so much emotionally — and even physically — was terrible.”

John was diagnosed with Tourette syndrome, a neurological disorder characterized by repetitive, stereotyped, involuntary movements and vocalizations known as tics. Rowe searched for answers at home in Little Rock, Ark., but couldn’t find John any help.

After hours of research and emails, Cindy located Leon Dure, M.D., the UAB professor and director of pediatric neurology who directs the Movement Disorders Clinic at The Children’s Hospital in Birmingham. He confirmed the diagnosis of Tourette syndrome and referred the Rowe’s to UAB’s Department of Occupational Therapy. The OT department was starting a new Pediatric Tourette’s Syndrome Clinic that focused on comprehensive behavioral intervention for tics (CBIT), a non-drug treatment option for battling the debilitating syndrome. Soon after contact, John was scheduled to be the clinic’s first patient in January 2010.

Three days after John’s first visit with CBIT coordinator Jan Rowe, Dr. O.T., the scratching stopped. When he visited the next week, his arm had healed, and he needed no Band-Aids.

“John’s story is just fantastic, and we couldn’t be happier for him and his family,” Rowe says. “And the great thing is, he isn’t the only story success. We’ve had a great first year, with about 85 to 90 percent success with our patients.” Rowe says one of two CBIT clinics at UAB’s Pediatric Tourette’s Syndrome Clinic is modeled after the clinic at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. UAB’s clinic is the only program in which OTs work in this way with children who have tics.

“This is a good fit for occupational therapists,” Rowe says. “Occupational therapy is about all your daily habits, routines and occupations. If your tics interfere with you being successful in those occupations, it makes sense to see an OT.”

Results from large, multi-site, National Institutes of Health-funded studies show that more than half of people who undergo CBIT will have significant reductions in the severity and improved ability to function.

Complete elimination of all tics and other Tourette’s symptoms does happen occasionally, but it is not what is expected. CBIT is not a cure for Tourette’s; it is a tool that can help individuals better manage their tics and reduce the negative influence those tics may have on their lives.

The cost for the services is $300, which includes an evaluation and the 10-week program. “It’s not a moneymaker for us,” Rowe says. “We’re just trying to fill a community need.”

Most tic disorders are diagnosed and reach their peak between ages 10-12, and most will disappear as they get into adolescence and early adulthood. The small percentage of children that continue to tic into adulthood typically are the most severe.

Many Tourette syndrome patients are treated with medication, and medication likely will remain the primary treatment for disorders. However, as it becomes more widely available, CBIT may be used as a first-line treatment, particularly in young children for whom side-effects and other safety concerns may limit the use of medication.

John’s doctors in Arkansas initially prescribed medication to treat his tics, but he didn’t respond well to the treatment. That led his mother to seek alternative solutions.

John’s arm scratching tic was one of the more unusual ones to be treated in the clinic’s first year. The most common tics have been eye blinking, facial grimacing, grunting, tongue clicking, throat clearing, neck, shoulder and arm. Rowe also has treated a boy with a jumping tic.

Overcoming anxiety

Tourette’s is often accompanied by co-morbidities such as attention deficit with hyperactivity disorder and obsessive-compulsive disorder.

Children with Tourette’s also tend to have high anxiety levels. “It’s uncommon for children to ask, ‘If I do this therapy, will my stress go down,’ or ‘Am I not going to stay awake at night all of the time worrying about things now?’” Rowe says.

When Rowe and her colleagues trained in the program under Douglas Woods, Ph.D., professor of psychology and director of clinical training at Wisconsin-Milwaukee, they learned to index the anxiety in clients and help the patient work through these issues.

“A significant percentage of our kids are in the above-average range for anxiety compared to their typical peers,” Rowe says. “But at the end of the program, we’re noticing a huge difference with a 90 percent positive response to CBIT and a reduction in their anxiety. That’s been another big success point for us.”

The anxiety led to some rough patches for John. Cindy specifically remembers an incident at her church. John typically would hang out in the stairwell crying.

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Life changes in a heartbeat – for better and for worse. So, when the source of all your heartbeats faces challenges, you want to be in a place with the resources to deal with everything from the routine to the most complex. At UAB, we have more than 50 specialists experienced in every aspect of your heart, your veins and arteries – world renowned experts who have their fingers on the pulse of the latest treatments and technologies, who are able to care for you no matter where you are in life. So, if you think you might have heart questions, start at the place most likely to have the answers. Start at UAB.

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