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## Golf outing tomorrow to benefit PA research

By Charlene Hoeflich

POMEROY - When Tom and Jennifer Buck Mouat's seemingly perfect baby daughter Gwendolyn Grace, was born on Feb. 3, 2006, they had never heard of propionic acidemia (PA) with which she would be diagnosed four days later.

Nor did they realize the impact their daughter's rare genetic disease would have on their personal lives and the role they would take in raising money for the Propionic Acidemia Foundation.

Tomorrow there will be a golf scramble at the Riverside Golf Club in Mason, W. Va. organized by the family of Bob Buck as a benefit to the Foundation. The Squirrel Scramble is a large golf event with several hole-in-one prizes including a 2007 Buick Lucerne, sponsored by Mark Porter GM Supercenter and \$10,000. There will also be a silent auction and raffle to include autographed Marshall Football gear, an autographed Ken Griffey, Jr. baseball, a Perfect Flame grill, along with numerous other things.

The cost for a four person team is \$200 and includes cart, green fees and lunch. Prizes will be awarded for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place teams, closest to the pin, longest drive and chipping contest. Registration begins at 8 a.m. with a shotgun start at 9 a.m. Pre-registration is recommended.

All proceeds will go directly to the Propionic Acidemia Foundation to help fund research to find a cure for the disease. For more information visit [www.gwenforacure.com](http://www.gwenforacure.com) or contact event organizer Jackie Harsh at 740-508-0412.

Gwendolyn Grace was an 8 pound, 6 ounce baby who on her third day of life was rushed to Columbus Children's Hospital where she became catastrophically ill. She was diagnosed a day later with Propionic Acidemia, a lifelong, life-threatening disease that causes damage to the brain, heart and liver, can cause seizures, and delays normal development like walking and talking. The median survival of a child with neonatal onset Propionic Acidemia is 3 years. This disorder is one of the 32 for which all newborns are screened in Ohio. Gwen's symptoms appeared before her screening results were known.

Jennifer Mouat said when Gwen survived her initial crisis, she knew God had spared her life for a reason. "That reason became apparent to me around the time I met with Michelle Ellis, another regional PA mom. We talked about the stress in our lives and the uncertainty of it all for most of an hour, but toward the end, our topic switched to treatments for PA or lack thereof. We decided that day we would help to make a difference in the lives of not only our children, but all children born with metabolic disorders."

There is no cure for this disease and very little research is underway, according to Mouat, but she said "because of the kindness and support of friends and community, they are closer than ever to finding a cure for PA.

"We have raised over \$35,000 since August 2006, which is more than a 50 percent increase in funds for the PA Foundation from previous years," Mouat said. "With this money we're raising, the foundation will be able to fund



**Submitted photo - Little Gwendolyn Grace who has propionic acidemia, and her mother, Jennifer Buck Mouat, enjoy playtime on a sunny afternoon.**

three research grants this year instead of two.”

She explained that funding researchers who gather data on PA gives them more access to large National Institute of Health grants. “One of the grants that is being funded because of their fundraising efforts focuses on gene therapy which promises to be a treatment for people with propionic acidemia by correcting the disorder at its most basic level,” Mouat said.

“It involves transferring the normal gene into the cells of the patient so that they can metabolize propionic acid. It is anticipated that patients treated by gene therapy would be able to tolerate more protein intake or depending on how successful, even liberalize their protein intake substantially.”

Mouat said that while some have described her as a “super mom” she denies that is the case. “All I am, is a mom who desperately loves her little girl and who wants to make a difference in her life and the lives of countless others.

“I find hope in my heart, knowing that I am raising awareness of this disease and so many like it. I find joy in my life from spending time planning these events with my very closest friends. If the day comes that Gwen should pass before me, I’ll have peace, knowing that she has peace and I helped fulfill God’s wishes with one of her many purposes in life; by doing what I could to help further research and bring years to the lives of other children.”

While Jennifer has resided in Columbus for the past 11 years after spending more than twice that time growing up in Pomeroy, she admits that her “heart still belongs to her hometown.” She expressed appreciation for the support and prayers of Bend area friends and acquaintances.

For more information about Propionic Acidemia or to learn more about Gwen Mouat, visit [www.GwenForACure](http://www.GwenForACure) or email [jenmouat@gmail.com](mailto:jenmouat@gmail.com).