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POMEROY, OH

NEWS

Child puts face on rare disease: Event to raise funds to fight Propionic Acidemia

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Submitted photo - Gwen Mouat, whose mom Jennifer (Buck) is a native of Meigs County, was born with the rare, genetic disease Propionic Acidemia. On Saturday, a cornhole tournament and hog roast at Bun's Party Barn will help raise funds to find a cure.

By Beth Sergent

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POMEROY - Most people have never heard of the rare, genetic disease Propionic Acidemia but for two-year old Gwen Mouat of Columbus, living with the disease is all she's ever known.

Since Gwen was diagnosed, her family (mom Jennifer is the daughter of Bob Buck of Pomeroy) has committed to raising funds to research a cure for the Propionic Acidemia Foundation and on Saturday that fundraising effort comes home to Meigs County. On Saturday a hog roast and cornhole tournament organized by the Buck family will take place at Bun's Party Barn to benefit PAF. In addition, there will be several drawings for prizes, including one for a Char Broil stainless steel grill.

Pork sandwich dinners will be sold for \$5 each beginning at 11 a.m. and continuing until it is gone. The dinners will include a pork sandwich, scalloped potatoes and chips. The hog and catering were donated by the family of Gwen's homecare nurse, Rae Baird.

As for the cornhole tournament, it will be a double elimination, four bracket setup. The entry fee for a two person team is \$20. Prizes will be awarded at the tournament with the first place team winning \$250 and

second place team receiving \$100. Registration begins at 11 a.m. with tournament play beginning at noon. Pre-registration is recommended due to the 32 team limit.

All proceeds will go directly to the PAF to help fund research to find a cure for the disease. For more information visit www.GwenForACure.com or contact event organizer Jackie Harsh at 740-508-0412.

PA is 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 PA is three years. This disorder is one of the 32 for which all newborns are screened in Ohio. Beating the odds, Gwen fought past her initial crisis and the 40-plus hospitalizations that have followed. Despite it all, Gwen's family says the child keeps a smile on her face and though any single virus or trauma could take her life tomorrow, this makes every day she's still here a sweet gift.

Gwen's mom Jennifer was recently selected as an "Everyday Hero" to be highlighted during the two-hour live televised broadcast of "Red, White & Boom" from 9-11 p.m. on Thursday, July 3 on NBC4 in Columbus. Propionic Acidemia Foundation will receive a \$500 donation as a result of Jennifer being chosen.

"We have raised over \$90,000 since August 2006, which is more than a 50 percent increase in funds for the PA Foundation from previous years," Jennifer said. "It became evident to me that I needed to join the board of the PA Foundation to have a voice in what research opportunities should be funded, and lend support to other affected families from around the globe."

While Jennifer has resided in Columbus for the past 12 years after spending more than twice that time growing up in Pomeroy, she admits that her "hometown is never far from her heart."

For more information about Propionic Acidemia or to learn more about Gwen Mouat and events, visit www.GwenForACure or email jenmouat@gmail.com.

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