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For immediate release

Ouachita student group to host Autism Awareness Walk on April 13

By Ashly Stracener

April 3, 2019

For more information, contact OBU's news bureau at newsbureau@obu.edu or (870) 245-5208



ARKADELPHIA, Ark.—One of Ouachita Baptist University's student organizations, Chi Mu women's social club, will host its first Autism Awareness Walk on Saturday, April 13, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Arkadelphia High School football stadium in honor of Autism Awareness Month. The walk will raise money for the Arkansas Autism Foundation.

Devon Carlson and Terri Roberts, representatives from the Arkansas Awareness Foundation, will be guest speakers to teach participants more about autism and how to love and accept those with autism.

Participants may sign up as individuals or as a team of five. A ticket purchase includes admittance to the walk, a lunch of hot dogs, water, chips and cookies and the opportunity to hear from guest speakers. A ticket purchase can also include a shirt commemorating the event for a few dollars more.

Bethany Crawley, a sophomore music education major from Jonesboro, Ark., and current philanthropy chair for Chi Mu, is largely responsible for coordinating the details of the walk.

"I'm going into the education field, so I will encounter autistic children, and I [already] have in working with kids at camp and the trampoline park that I work at," Crawley said. "It's such a big deal that needs to be addressed. Yeah, these kids are different, but they still deserve love and to be loved on. It's not something that needs to be fixed, but it's something that needs to be accepted."

"The money that we'll raise is going to support the Arkansas Autism Foundation, and they do things that give autistic children opportunities to be involved, socialize and feel loved," Crawley continued. "It's so much bigger than Chi Mu and Ouachita. We'd love to see the broader Ouachita and Arkadelphia communities join us and get involved in this cause."

"Many people are touched by autism spectrum disorders (ASD) regularly but do not know how to positively engage in such encounters," said Adam Wheat, guest experience coordinator for Ouachita and Chi Mu staff sponsor. "Organizations like the Arkansas Autism Foundation and events like these provide

spaces to educate and encourage. So your presence expresses your willingness to learn and your support for those who may feel alone in their journey.

“Those with ASD see the world differently and can broaden our own perspectives if we give them the chance,” Wheat added. “Walking may not seem like much, but it’s a step into the conversation, which is the beginning of all important change.”

Tickets are [available for purchase online](#) and on the [Women of Chi Mu Facebook page](#). Tickets also may be purchase by reaching out to any Chi Mu member. For a team of five, the cost is \$75 or \$100 to include shirts. For individual participants, the cost is \$20 or \$25 to include a shirt. For those who are unable to attend the event but would like to contribute to the cause, shirts are available for purchase for \$25 and donations also are accepted.

For more information about the Autism Awareness Walk, contact Bethany Crawley at 870-919-8065 or cra64637@obu.edu.

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