

Media Announcement



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 2, 2005

Contact: Claire Mullins
(410) 560-2120 x 226
(800) 642-1184 x 226

MISS TEEN DORCHESTER CO. INTERNATIONAL WALKS TO HELP CHILDREN BREATHE EASIER

HUNT VALLEY, MARYLAND -- When you can't breathe, nothing else matters.

No one knows that better than Angela Depto, a freshman at North Dorchester High School who was diagnosed with asthma at age 11. Now 14, she is using her title of Miss Teen Dorchester County International to raise awareness of asthma, a potentially fatal disease.

It is estimated that nearly 600,000 Maryland residents, many of them children, have a history of asthma. It is the leading cause of school and work absenteeism, and the leading chronic childhood illness in the U.S.

In an effort to help raise funds for asthma education and research, Miss Depto, who has assembled a team of students from North Dorchester High School, will walk on Saturday, November 12, 2005 as the American Lung Association of Maryland holds the Eastern Shore Asthma Walk, a 5K event at Salisbury City Park and Zoo in Salisbury, MD. The event kicks off at 10:00 a.m., with registration at 9:00 a.m. Wicomico County Sheriff R. Hunter Nelms is the event's honorary chair. The event is sponsored in part by M&T Bank, Perdue Farms, Inc., and SunTrust Bank.

Proceeds from this free, family-friendly fun walk go to help the American Lung Association of Maryland's fight against asthma and other lung diseases, through education, advocacy and research in Maryland.

One education program that is funded by the Eastern Shore Asthma Walk is *Camp SuperKids*. Each summer for more than 20 years, the American Lung Association of Maryland, headquartered in Hunt Valley, MD, with regional offices in Laurel and Salisbury, has organized a one-week camp for Maryland children ages 7-12 suffering from asthma. The camp provides education on asthma warning signs, treatments, and anatomy of the respiratory system with more traditional camp activities like swimming, team building, and arts & crafts. The goal of the camp is to provide children with information that will help them to control their disease and avoid situations that would lead to an emergency room visit. Medically trained staff and volunteers serve as educators and counselors to the children. Most of the children attending *Camp SuperKids* come from low-income households and receive scholarships courtesy of local and national companies and organizations.

"We want to empower kids with the tools to manage their asthma in addition to providing them with a summer camp experience. It helps them to feel that they can do things that other kids do – that having asthma isn't a roadblock to a normal life," says Jim Phillips, Regional Director of the American Lung Association of Maryland's Eastern Shore office in Salisbury.

-more-

Other organizations that have teams participating in the walk include Salisbury University, Wicomico County Board of Education, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, McCready Hospital, Peninsula Regional Medical Center, Wicomico County Health Department, Wicomico County Sheriff's Office, St. Francis DeSales School, State Highway Administration, M&T Bank, Phi Mu Fraternity of Salisbury University, Girls on Top of the World, Boscov's, Delmarva Power, Division of Parole & Probation, Perdue Farms, Most Blessed Sacrament Catholic School, Wicomico County Drug Treatment Court, and SunTrust Bank.

With the generous support of these groups, the public, and volunteers like Angela Depto, the American Lung Association of Maryland is "Improving life, one breath at a time."

For more information about participating in the Eastern Shore Asthma Walk on November 12, call 410-548-1613 or log on to www.asthmawalk.org.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT ASTHMA

- n Asthma is a lung disease that affects your ability to breathe when your airways react to something that bothers your lungs. It is a chronic disease; once you have it, you live with it forever.
- n It is estimated that 12% of adults and 11% of children in Maryland have asthma.
- n African-Americans have the highest asthma prevalence of any racial/ethnic group; the rate is 39 percent higher than that for Caucasians.
- n Asthma is the third leading cause of hospitalization among children under the age of 15.
- n An average of 84 Maryland residents die each year from asthma as an underlying cause.
- n No one should have to die of asthma. It is a manageable disease.
- n The American Lung Association of Maryland offers local programs to help adults and children manage their asthma. For information call 1-800-642-1184 or visit www.marylandlung.org.

###

Miss Depto is available for interviews. Please call Claire Mullins at the American Lung Association of Maryland at (410) 560.2120 x226 or (800) 642.1184 x226 to schedule.