

PERSON OF THE WEEK

'A community effort'

N. Cambria senior organizes walkathon

BY FRANK SOJAK
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Students in a leadership program at Northern Cambria High School are on the right track.

During the past school year, the 12 members of the school's chapter of the Family, Career and Community Leaders of America, a national leadership program, have helped the community in a variety of ways.

Even though school is out for the summer, the chapter is still hard at work.

On July 18, the chapter is holding a walkathon at the school track to raise money for Autism Speaks, a charity that is helping people with autism and working to find a cure for the disorder.

The goal is to raise at least \$3,000, said Joshua Griffiths, the chapter's acting president, who is leading the event.

"It (autism) has been an increasing problem, and our chapter wants to help out," he said.

In February, chapter adviser Melissa Welsh asked the chapter what it wanted to do next to benefit the community.

Joshua, who will be a senior in the fall, said they came up with a list of charities to help and decided on Autism Speaks.

He said the walkathon committee, comprised of Janae Dunchack, Julie Pawlikowski, Shane Scdemyer, Jessica Rocco and Jenna Bobik, plus the other members of the chapter, are working hard on the project.

Welsh and school nurse Denise Horne also have been a big help with the project, Joshua said.

Joshua said students, teachers and staff at the school have donated money.

Individuals and businesses in the community also have been generous, donating money plus food and beverages for the event, he said.

Three Northern Cambria businesses,

the walkers will be soliciting donations from sponsors.

Joshua, who plays the saxophone in the marching band, said the chapter is always conducting projects to help others.

During the past school year Janae Dunchack, who was the chapter's president, led efforts such as collecting food for food pantries, holding dances to fight breast cancer and hosting a talent show to showcase the gifts that students possess, said the 17-year-old.

"It's just a great feeling to help out and know that we are doing something good for the community," he said.

The work also shows that the students care about others, he said.

For his efforts, Joshua is the Person of the Week.

"Josh is an outstanding young man that is focused on how his activities not only better himself but those around him," Welsh said.

"He is doing a tremendous job of reaching out to the community to gain support. We really hope that more individuals sign up for the walk as a showing of support to all those families in the area who are affected by autism."

Tribune-Democrat editors select a Person of the Week from nominations made by readers. To nominate someone, call 532-5058, 24 hours a day.

If you go ...

What: Walkathon for Autism Speaks.

When: July 18.

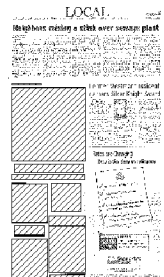
Where: Northern Cambria High School.

Times: Registration, 9 to 10 a.m.; walkathon, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

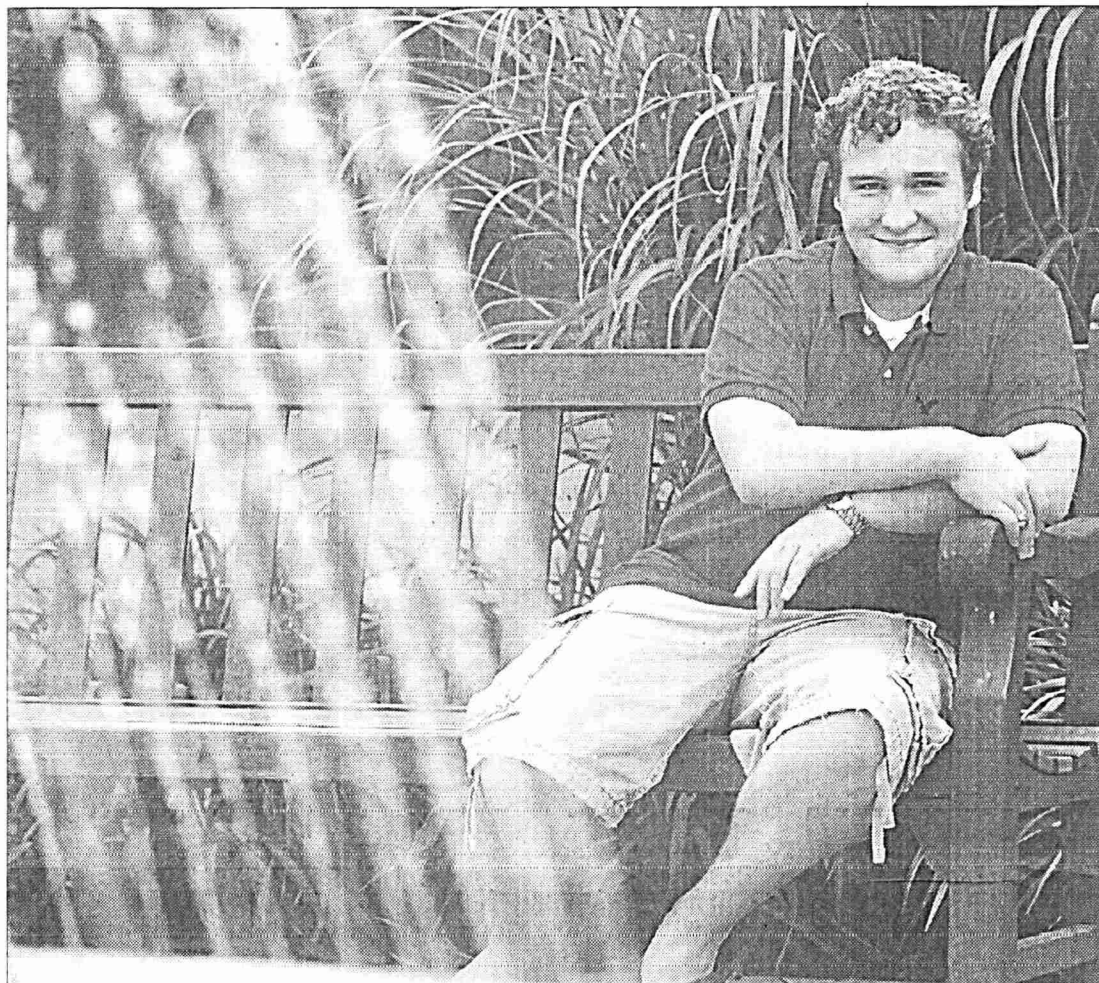
Registration fee: \$5.

Information: Send e-mail to lil_griff218@yahoo.com.

"It (autism) has been an increasing problem, and our chapter wants to help out."



JOSHUA GRIFFITHS



TODD BERKEY/THE TRIBUNE-DEMOCRAT

Joshua Griffiths sits near a fountain on the campus of St. Francis University in Loretto. Griffiths, a senior at Northern Cambria High School and acting president of the school's chapter of Family, Career and Community Leaders of America, is the Person of the Week for organizing a walkathon to benefit Autism Speaks.