



Waunakee Rotary Club

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If Andrea Wipperfurth's son, Max, had been born 30 or so years ago, he may have never had the surgery needed to repair two heart defects and may have died in the hospital.

The Waunakee native's son has Down syndrome, and at the Waunakee Rotary Club's Aug. 14 meeting, Andrea said today, people with disabilities contribute much more to society.

Andrea said when her son was born, he appeared doll-like. A nurse herself, Andrea said that first night after he was born, she sensed something was different.

The next morning, the doctor and physician's assistant stood at the foot of her bed to relay the surprising news about Max. Andrea recalled her mother-in-law sitting next to her remained completely silent.

"She was remembering children growing up with a disability – they were kept hidden," Andrea said. "I realized if I were born with Down syndrome, my family may have been advised to leave me at the hospital."

Today, Andrea is the executive director of the Madison Area Down Syndrome Society. She works to educate medical professionals about how to break the news to parents. Her work also involves creating a network for those parents and dispelling damaging images.

Andrea was quoted in the Aug. 14 Wisconsin State Journal about how harmful terms such as "retard" are as she reacted to the recently released Ben Stiller film, "Tropic Thunder."

Her son, Max, is nearly 7 now, and has recently completed kindergarten. He will enter first grade this fall. Andrea said she is grateful that his school has allowed him to contribute. Last year, he taught a Hispanic student how to say the alphabet.

"What I hope to do is create a counter message for families that get that diagnosis," Andrea said. "The world is really changing for people with disabilities."

Andrea, with a group of other parents, started the Madison Area Down Syndrome Society seven years ago. They started the first Buddy Walk to help promote it and hoped to break even on the t-shirt printings. Eventually, the group raised some money and incorporated as a non-profit.

Andrea later landed the position as the group's executive director and no longer works as a nurse.

Andrea is now planning for this year's Buddy Walk Saturday, Sept. 13, at 11 a.m. at Warner Park.

Last year, some 1,400 participated and raised \$40,000.

Andrea said the Waunakee community has been extremely supportive and recently, the high school hosted the Lose the Training Wheels Bike Camp for youths with disabilities. She added that as a kid growing up in Waunakee, riding around on her bike meant everything.

"For our kids not to be able to do that, that makes a big difference in our lives," she said.

Other news:

- Jon Jordan was inducted as a member under the classification financial representative.

- Marie Zorn, the Rotary Exchange student, has arrived. Greg Garton said unfortunately, her luggage was delayed, but she is enrolled and ready to attend school Sept. 2.

- Phil Willems said at the Aug. 18 Waunakee Village Board meeting, a proclamation will be presented to the Waunakee Rotary Club acknowledging the club's contributions. The club recently finished the path

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Calendar of Events:

- Sept. 4, fall golf outing.
- Oct. 4-5, Wauktoberfest

around the former "stink pond" near the Village Center. Phil urged club members to attend and take a bow.

Guests: Jon Allen, guest of Leonard Allen; Margaret Meyer, guest of James Meyer.

Visiting Rotarians: Matt Wahoske, Madison Downtown.

Birthdays: None.

Anniversaries: Aug. 26, Lori and Peter Derauf; Aug. 26, John and Debbie Cullen; Aug. 27, Dan and Joyce Muxfeld; Aug. 27, Danny and Lori Miller.

Prayers: Aug. 21, Susan Vergeront; Aug. 28, Leonard Allen.

Programs: Aug. 21, meet the candidates for the 81st District Assembly primary.

Greeters: Aug. 21, Rich Harris and Bob Hoskins; Aug. 28, Bob Kase and Jim Jukes; Sept. 4, Kevin Kearney and David Kennedy.

Make up meetings online

It's easy to make up a meeting on the Internet. The site is www.rotaryclubone.org. Print out the form and give it to Phil Willems, the club secretary.