

# The DALLAS POST

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## Trail benches memorialize one, honor others

By REBECCA BRIA  
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It's been nearly 37 years since Richard Achuff's son last played in Shavertown.

Robert Mills Achuff, who lived with his parents, Richard and the late Beverly Achuff, in Shavertown, drowned on December 6, 1972 in the very high waters of Toby Creek on East Center Street. The 7-year-old's body was found in the creek near the bottom of Harris Hill Road.

On July 18, Brian Ghezzi, age

16, installed a bench donated by Achuff in memory of his son at the entrance to the Back Mountain Trail off Harris Hill Road. The bench was one of two put on the trail by Ghezzi as part of his Eagle Scout project.

Ghezzi is the son of Dan and Irene Ghezzi, of Dallas. He is a member of Boy Scout Troop 232 out of Gate of Heaven, Dallas and is in the 11th-grade at Holy Redeemer High School in Wilkes-Barre.

Ghezzi often uses the trail and likes to ride his bike from his

home to the trail and to Luzerne and back. He chose the trail as the location for his Eagle Scout project after some brainstorming.

"When I began thinking about what project I was going to do, I couldn't think of anything so I thought about going to organizations and asking if they needed anything done," Ghezzi said. "I then realized that my one friend's dad, Mr. Mark Albrecht, is part of the Anthracite Scenic Trails Association that works on the Back Mountain Trail. When I went to him, he said they could use more

benches on the trail and that's how it started."

An on-site dedication ceremony for the new benches on the trail was held on September 13.

Richard Achuff, who has lived Wilkes-Barre since the mid-1990s, attended the ceremony. Achuff says he wanted to put a

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Richard Achuff sits on a newly installed park bench dedicated to the memory of his son, Robert Mills Achuff, who drowned in Toby's Creek in 1972.



## Diabetes walk comes to BMT

By REBECCA BRIA  
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A long-time annual fundraising walk has found a new home at Dallas Middle School.

Lauren Wiley, director for the American Diabetes Association of Northeastern Pennsylvania, says because so many of the participants in the annual event are from the Back Mountain the organization decided to move the walk to Dallas this year. It was previously held at Harveys Lake for many years and moved to Kirby Park several years ago.

**If you go**  
American Diabetes Association of Northeastern Pennsylvania 2009 Step Out: Walk to Fight Diabetes Saturday, Oct. 3  
Dallas Middle School track  
Check-in is at 9 a.m. The walk begins at 10 a.m.

The American Diabetes Association of Northeastern Pennsylvania 2009 Step Out: Walk to Fight Diabetes will be held on Saturday, Oct. 3, at the Dallas Middle School track. Check-in is at 9 a.m. in the school cafeteria and the walk begins at 10 a.m.

Participants may choose to walk one mile or three miles. Walkers who donate or raise \$100 or more will receive a free T-shirt. The walk is open to the public.

"We anticipate a large number of not only Dallas Middle School students, but also community members," said Tom Duffy, principal of Dallas Middle School. "We've encouraged all our middle school sports teams through our coaches to come in uniform."

According to the American Diabetes Association, 24 million Americans and one million Pennsylvanians have diabetes. If present trends continue, one in three Americans and one in two minorities

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## BIGGEST AND BEST-EVER DALLAS HARVEST FESTIVAL



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Main Street in Dallas was blocked off for the Seventh Annual Dallas Harvest Festival last Sunday. The event is billed as an annual block party with entertainment, food and booths where the community re-unites until the next year. For more photos from this year's Dallas Harvest Festival, please turn to page 7.

## Elementary teacher spends summer time being a scientist

Heather Wertman spent five weeks in a laboratory in Florida this summer.

By REBECCA BRIA  
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Lehman-Jackson Elementary School first-grade teacher Heather Wertman had never worked in a laboratory.

But Wertman was intrigued when her brother-in-law, David Mazyck, Ph.D., a professor at the University of Florida, told her about an opportunity for teachers to do laboratory work at Sol-gel Solutions through the National Science Foundation Grant Program at the University of Florida.

The National Science Foundation offers supplements to small business grantees to encourage the participation of kindergarten through 12th-grade teachers in scientific research through a program called Research Experience for Teachers.

The mission of Sol-gel Solutions is to diagnose and design solutions for reducing discharges of pollutants into the environment. The company was co-

founded in 2004 by Mazyck, a Lake-Lehman graduate, and several investors.

Although high school and middle school teachers had done work through the program before at Sol-gel Solutions, Wertman was the first elementary school teacher to do so. She spent five weeks this past summer at the Gainesville, Fla. facility.

"I am thrilled to have been part of this opportunity that has allowed me to participate in scientific research using cutting-edge technology and that I'll also be able to develop activities to translate my research experience into the classroom," Wertman said.

Wertman worked in Sol-gel Solutions and University of Florida laboratories where she learned how to use activated carbon to clean up different elements in the environment. She was also taught how to properly set up a laboratory for various experiments.

Wertman plans to incorporate the knowledge she gained at Sol-gel Solutions into her classroom. She will use activated carbon with her students to see if it and other materials absorb dye from water. They will also compare

carbon to saw dust, coffee grounds and sand. "I want my students to be excited by math and science and spark their interest in science and engineering," Wertman said. "Making their learning relevant through my own hands-on research experiences is vital to their learning process and it gives the students an understanding of what researchers do."

Through the grant program, Wertman was able to purchase different vials and other science instruments for Lehman-Jackson students that are not usually available to students at the elementary level. She is also still in communication with Sol-gel Solutions grant writers and hopes to eventually get involved with grant writing to benefit the students in her classroom and the entire school district.

Wertman has been a teacher for 13 years. In addition to her first-grade teaching position, she is also the elementary math chairperson for the Lake-Lehman School District.

Wertman and her husband, John, co-own J&J Deli in Dallas. The couple resides in Lehman Township.



Lehman-Jackson Elementary School teacher Heather Wertman had the opportunity to work in a laboratory in Gainesville, Fla. this summer.



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