

# THE CLIPPER WEEKLY

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Dedicated to The North Eastman Community

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## Andrew Dunn Walk/Run to be held May 10

*By Dianne Hamill*

The Andrew Dunn Walk/Run is continuing its mission to fight depression one step at a time.

Started in 2007 by Judy Dunn and Brenda Balinski, the annual event is named after Dunn's son Andrew. The 23-year-old took his own life in December 2006 after battling with depression.

Determined to help others living with mental illness and their families, Judy and Brenda held the first walk/run event just months after Andrew's death.

"It's about turning a difficult thing into a positive," Judy said about the annual event.

From just over 100 participants in its first year, the event has expanded to include over 800 participants, supporters and volunteers – all coming together to raise awareness about the stigma surrounding mental illness and depression.

Since its inception, the Andrew Dunn Walk/Run has raised a total of \$200,000 for mental health initiatives and events. This year, organizers expect to push that number to over \$250,000.

Started as a way to remember Andrew, Judy said the day has evolved into more than just a memorial to her son.

"We're here to support people in their struggle to get better and raise awareness about mental health," she said. "We're supporting people in the struggle to get better."

And although this year's event will fall on what would have been Andrew's 31st birthday, Judy said the event is about supporting those living with mental illness and their families.

"It will always be personal to me, but it has moved beyond that."

This year's Andrew Dunn Walk/Run will take place May 10 at the Oakbank Arena.

A longtime supporter of the event, radio personality Ace Burpee will once again emcee the 2014 walk/run.

Anola's own award-winning children's entertainer Al Simmons will also take to the stage. Members of the Cooks Creek Dance Academy will also entertain the crowd.

Locally owned Thrive Fitness, who already raised over \$1,500 for the event through their April 11 Zumba event, will also be on hand. Participants will also receive free massages from Waterfront Massage Therapy.

With a host of support from businesses around the region, including Tim Hortons and the Running Room, participants will also be treated to a free barbecue courtesy

of Oakbank Co-op and the local Kinsmen. A silent auction will also take place.

Beausejour Handi-Van will once again be providing a free shuttle service from Beausejour and surrounding areas to Oakbank on race day. Call 204-268-4123 to book your spot.

Registration will begin at 9:30 a.m., with the five and 10 kilometre walk/run beginning at 11 a.m.

For more information, including registration and pledge forms, visit [www.andrewdunn.org](http://www.andrewdunn.org) or call Judy Dunn at 204-444-5228 or [jd4mdam@gmail.com](mailto:jd4mdam@gmail.com)