

Thursday, September 28, 2006

Portal

State grant will fund

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The City of Portal recently received a grant for \$100,000 from the Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority to help fund a major

Walk for autism this weekend

Andrew's Answer Walk to Talk set for Saturday in the Boro

Special to the Herald

Statesboro will host Andrew's Answer Walk to Talk Saturday. While this is the third annual event, it is the first time the autism awareness and fund raiser will be held in Statesboro.

Andrew's Answer, based in Savannah, is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting families who have a loved one diagnosed with autism, said Kim Spencer, spokesman for the event. Spencer is the mother of a child with autism.

The Walk to Talk will begin at the Honey Bowen Building at the Statesboro Recreation Department. Check-in begins at 9 a.m. with the walk beginning at 9:30 a.m., she said.

The walk entry donation is \$25. The walk is three miles, but participants will also enjoy food, a resource fair and children's activities, she said.

The reason the event is called "Walk to Talk" is because half of children diagnosed with autism will never learn to speak. One in 166 children born today will be affected by autism.

Autism is a developmental disease which usually appears between 15 and 20 months of age. A child with autism may progress normally, then appear to regress, losing speech, social skills and physical abilities, she said.

Autism is on the increase. Ten years ago the disease affected one in 10,000 children. Five years ago one in every 500 children were diagnosed with autism. Today, one in 166 have the disease. It is five times more prevalent in boys than in girls. Over 1.5 million Americans suffer from autism, which is more than those with Down's Syndrome, childhood diabetes and childhood cancer combined, Spencer said.

For more information on autism and Andrew's Answer, or the Walk to Talk, call (912) 691-0790 or send email to pace_andrewsanswer@comcast.net.