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Noah's Gift flying high

Memorial 5K gets a boost with 50 percent challenge grant

By WHITLEY RIVES
Special to My Life

Participants in the Noah's Gift Memorial 5K, held Oct. 1, had an added incentive to raise funds — a 50 percent challenge grant from the Community Foundation of Northwest Mississippi.

"If Noah's Gift supporters can add \$25,000 to this endowment by March 31, 2012, then the Community Foundation will add \$12,500," Community Foundation president Tom Pittman said. "Our board of directors recognizes the importance of this permanent charitable asset to provide young people life-changing experiences. We want to encourage everyone to help meet the \$25,000 goal of this event."

The purpose of the Noah's Gift endowment fund is to inspire and reward deserving young people with the gift of an extraordinary experience that was of interest to 16-year-old Noah Costa at the time of his death. Costa's interests were wide-ranging and included playing



Noah Costa and skydiving instructor John Croce enjoy Costa's thrilling first skydive late last summer at West Tennessee Skydiving. Costa is the inspiration behind the Noah's Gift endowment fund and the "Noah's Gift Memorial 5K Run-Walk-Skate" which was held Oct. 1 in Hernando. Among the items raffled at the event were two tandem skydiving jumps from West Tennessee Skydiving.

hockey, traveling, hiking, water sports, skydiving, music and much more.

"We are really excited about the opportunity to give a child an experience he or she could never afford, and seeing how that experience inspires and changes their lives," Noah's Gift 5K entertainment chairwoman Lisa Beene said. "This event has been a really beautiful celebration of a community's compassionate faith, hope for the future and healing."

The 5K run (skate or walk) started on the Square in Hernando, and afterward, there were activities on the lawn of Maddox Foundation and at Facello's

Tuscan Grill on the square. The Maddox Foundation, 180 W. Commerce, hosted activities including live musical entertainment, a bounce house and face painting. Papa John's Pizza in Hernando sold pizza to benefit the Noah's Gift fund, and Caketabulous hosted a mini-cupcake charity bake sale.

The fun also included two raffles. The first raffle was from West Tennessee Skydiving for two tandem skydiving jumps, each worth \$350. The second raffle included more than \$3,000 worth of a variety of items, including a 46-inch Samsung LED 6500 Series TV from Best Buy's Southaven store. Folks had a

chance to win prizes such as a bottle of wine at Cork & Barrel, a \$100 Kroger gift card, and an overnight stay and dinner at Bonne Terre Inn.

All proceeds from the event will benefit the Noah's Gift endowed fund at the Community Foundation of Northwest Mississippi, which is also the presenting sponsor of the Noah's Gift Memorial 5K.

For more information about the Noah's Gift fund, contact Pittman at (662)449-5002 or tompittman@cfnm.org.

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