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Former student to travel around the world for son's treatment



SUBMITTED PHOTO
Cody Fend, a blind 2-year-old boy and son of a former Slippery Rock student, will undergo a procedure in China this summer to possibly give him the ability to see.

By Liz Glazier
Rocket Assistant Focus Editor

Former Slippery Rock University student Jessica Fend never thought she would have the chance to travel to China.

After having a son born with an optical condition that causes blindness, she'll be going to China this summer, but it won't be for pleasure.

Fend, 26, whose maiden name is Morgan, started attending SRU in the fall of 2000 to get a degree in sport management and met Josh Fend through a mutual friend. In 2004, Jessica stopped attending SRU. She then married Josh in February of 2005 and had a son, Cody, on June 29 of that same year.

But when Cody was six months old, Jessica and Josh noticed something was wrong with Cody's behavior.

"I always kind of thought something was wrong because he never made much eye contact," Jessica said. "We didn't really think it was quite this bad though."

Jessica found out that Cody had optic-nerve hypoplasia and had been almost fully blind since birth.

"It's a condition where the actual optic nerves are underdeveloped," Jessica said. "They are basically too short."

Doctors aren't sure what causes this condition, but do know that optic-nerve hypoplasia is the leading cause of blindness in children.

Cody, who's two and a half years old, should have around 1.2 million optic nerves in his eye, Jessica said. But Cody only has about 200,000.

"He has light perception," Jessica said. "He can tell day from night, but can't see other than that."

This condition also causes delays on other skills toddlers are working to develop, such as speaking or eating.

"Most kids repeat what they see their parents doing," Jessica said. "He can't see us eat, so it took him a while to do it. He used to spit out the food we gave him."

When Cody's condition was discovered, Jessica and Josh were told that there was nothing that could be done and that they should anticipate Cody being blind for life.

But after doing a little research and talking with other parents of

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Moving Concepts helps youngsters learn & develop

By Liz Glazier
Rocket Assistant Focus Editor

The college of education at Slippery Rock University prides itself on the hands-on experience it provides its students.

The Moving Concepts program was created on campus in order to both supplement that experience and provide a fun environment for local preschoolers.

Marybeth Miller, an assistant professor in the physical education who's teaching two sections of the department's movement education course this semester, started the program in the spring of 2007.

"This course provides moving concepts and links movement to the course content that we're studying in class," Miller said. "It also serves the need of providing a movement course for preschoolers with and without disabilities."

The movement education course is held on Tuesdays and Thursdays. During Tuesday's class, a lecture is given and learning centers are created. These are stations that the preschoolers stop by to hone their motor skills through a variety of activities.

On Thursdays, the children attend the free program at Morrow Field House for 45-minute sessions. There are one or two children paired up with each SRU student enrolled in the course.

"We try to pair a disabled preschooler with a non-disabled child," Miller said.

There are four learning centers that the children go to, with each station featuring a theme that focuses on different types of movement.



JOEY KENNEDY/THE ROCKET
Kayleen Holtz, 5, goes through a tunnel during the weekly Moving Concepts program. The program, held every Thursday in Morrow Field House, is intended to help preschoolers learn through a series of large movement activities.

Some of the themes include focus on balance, locomotor skills, body awareness and movement in relationship with others.

Melissa Riley, a 21-year-old junior, says she enjoys seeing the kids improve from week to week.

"Each week's activities build on what we did the previous week," Riley said. "It's nice to work with the children and get to see how they continue to understand the concepts we are teaching them."

Riley, a dual elementary and special education major, thinks working in the program will help later on in life with

her career.

"It's a good way to explore what we are learning about in class," Riley said. "It's good experience with children, and that will help benefit my future career."

There are 53 preschoolers currently taking part in the Moving Concepts program. Most of the children are from the Slippery Rock Daycare Center, the Butler County Children's Center and the Slippery Rock and Grove City areas.

"The number of children we have has almost doubled from last year," Miller

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Battle of the Bands provides reward for talent, creativity

By Amber Wilhelm
Rocket Contributor

The Battle of the Bands is a chance for musicians to show off their acts for a live audience and to win some money while they're at it.

It is also a chance for students to enjoy a free concert on campus.

Aubrie Schnelle, a 24-year-old graduate student in school counseling, is the main organizer of the battle, which will be held at 7 p.m. tonight in the University Union's Multi-Purpose Room.

"There is a \$200 grand prize for first place, and (the winners) also get airtime on WSRU radio," Schnelle said. "Second place gets \$100 and third gets \$50."

Rusty Rocus, a business marketing junior, is the drummer for Cynic Meets the Believer, one of the bands that will be competing in the battle. Rocus said that playing in front of a crowd is his favorite thing about being in the band.

"You get to play for an audience and get a reaction. It's a natural high," Rocus, 22, said. "You see people moving around or nodding their heads, and it makes you feel good."

Garth Porter, a 21-year-old sophomore marketing major, is the drummer for another battling band, Remora Deign. He said he hopes there will be a big crowd at the battle.

"It's cool to put the stuff you've worked on in your free time on display for someone else to enjoy," Porter said.

Some of the bands that will perform at the battle have been together for a long time. Cynic Meets the Believer is one such band.

"This band has been together for a year now," Rocus said. "I've been playing with my friends in the band since we were in high school. It started out as a fun recording project and turned into Cynic."

But for some of the bands in the battle, this will be their first time playing together in front of an audience.

"We've been a band for a month and a half," said Abir

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