



Analise Back, 7, of Seville, achieves height with her kite on a not-so-windy Saturday at the Kite Fest at Buckeye Woods Park in Lafayette Township.
BOB SANDRICK / GAZETTE



LAFAYETTE TWP. — About 150 kite enthusiasts of all ages attended the third annual Kite Fest on Saturday at Buckeye Woods Park that also recognized individuals recovering from alcohol and drug addiction.

“Kites are a symbol of freedom, and moving from darkness to light,” said Brian Nowak, executive director of the Medina County Drug Abuse Commission. “Also, this is an opportunity to bring families together, because we know families are a preventative factor against drug abuse.”

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The free event was organized by the drug abuse commission and New Era Kite Club of West Virginia. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, a branch of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, has designated September as National Recovery Month.

At the fest, the kite club sold kites and hosted a kite-building workshop for children. Medina County Share Cluster, which promotes nonviolent, drug-free living, and young volunteers painted faces and crafted balloon animals. The Medina County Sheriff's Office DARE car and K-9 Unit made appearances.

The Leyva family of Medina built their own kites at the fest. Kelsey Leyva, 11, said she regularly flies kites at her grandmother's house, where there is plenty of room.

"I thought the kite here wouldn't work because it was do-it-yourself," Kelsey said. "But it actually worked better than other ones."

Megan Hillard, of Medina, accompanied her 3-year-old son, Leo, to the kite fest.

"It's just a great festival and a nice cause," Hillard said. "And it's a beautiful day. We normally would scout out windier days for kite flying, but this is nice, too. The wind comes in gusts."

Hillard said her father, Jim Morrisey of Canton, also attended.

"He has a nice collection of kites," Morrisey said. "It's a hobby of his."

This year, another event — the 5K Walk/Run for Recovery — was paired with the kite fest and sponsored by Running 2 Be Well of Medina. About 80 runners and walkers participated. Each donated \$25, which raised about \$2,000 for Fighting for Alyssa, a nonprofit that works to prevent and treat substance abuse and addiction.

After the 5K, Fighting for Alyssa donated \$12,500 to several groups, including Robby's Voice, a Medina addiction-recovery center; The LCADA Way, which provides addiction-recovery programs in the Medina County area; Summit County Community Partnership, which brings together resources to fight substance abuse; and Community Health Center, a Summit County organization that helps those struggling with addiction.

Sponsors of the Kite Fest and 5K included TITLE Boxing Club, Medina Dairy Queen,



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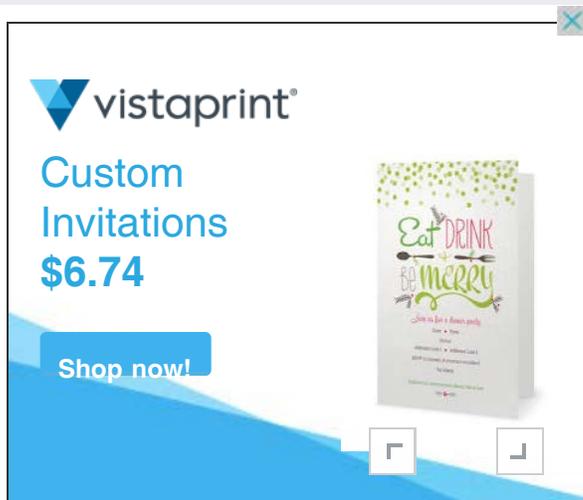
Buehler's Fresh Food Markets Inc., The LCADA Way and Medina County Share Cluster.

Messages may be left for Bob Sandrick at (330) 721-4060.

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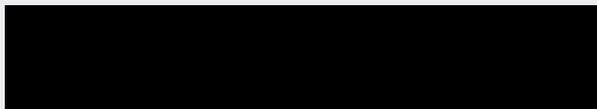
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