

FUNDRAISER

**Musicians come together for Acoustics for Autism**

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About 30 local musical acts will gather March 10 to rock out in support of Project iAm, a charity that provides scholarships to children with autism.

This is the sixth year of the event called Acoustics for Autism. The concert, which features three stages, is the result of founder Nicole Khoury's hard work. The attorney started Project iAm after speaking with her best friend, whose child has autism, about the financial difficulties that families whose children have autism can face.

"I've seen the struggles of these families. They're the people who need the money for their treatment and therapy and unfortunately there aren't a lot of resources at all," Khoury said.

Khoury's band Arctic Clam is one of the bands playing at the show, which takes place at The Village Idiot and Buster Brown's Lounge. Each venue features a stage and a heated tent will house kid-friendly activities and a third stage.

Many of the bands playing have been part of the event for years, Khoury said. Her band plays at 6:15 p.m. on The Village Idiot stage.

"It's just an awesome, feel-good event. The musicians that are there want to support us and not because they want to put it on their resume," Khoury said.

One of those musicians is Dave Carpenter, who will play with The Jaeglers at 8:15 p.m. on The Village Idiot stage. Carpenter helped co-found the concert six years ago.

Carpenter said when they started the event, he didn't foresee it becoming as big as it is today.

"I jokingly say to Nicole, 'It's like pushing a snowball off a mountain.' It just continues to build," he said, adding that the musicians who keep coming back make it successful.

"I really want to highlight all the other musicians that have really helped us out. These musicians have donated their time on a Sunday."

Playing on a Sunday is one of the things singer-songwriter Kyle White enjoys about Acoustics for Autism.

"It's nice that it's on a Sunday and I get to see all my musician friends," White said. "We all play the same nights [the rest of the week]."

White, who has been involved with the annual concert since its start, also emphasized, "The energy's always just amazing. All of the best music in the city is there in one day, so that's always a bonus."

White is set to play at 3:10 p.m. on The Village Idiot stage.

Another featured musician is John Barile, who is set to play with Bobby May at 3:50 p.m. on The Village Idiot stage.

"[Project iAm] does such a good job promoting [the concert] and it's a great cause," Barile said. "[Khoury's] just a fantastic person."

He said his favorite part of Acoustics for Autism is "the camaraderie of all us musicians coming together for a great cause."

Jeff Stewart will play with the 25's at 7:15 p.m. at The Village Idiot stage. Like Khoury, he has a personal connection to the concert's cause.

"One of my best friends has a son that's autistic and I know what he goes through," he said. "It's great to do this thing for the kids."

He added that he is looking forward to playing at The Village Idiot.

"The Village Idiot is a small little community bar. ... I'm looking forward to drinking the beer, eating the pizza and playing the music," Stewart said.

The musicians also include The Eight-Fifteens. Pat Lewandowski, Calen Savidge, Brian Bocian, Zak Ward, Flabongo Nation and several others. DJ Sid will play between sets.

The concert also features chances for attendees to score some loot with a raffle, prize vault and silent auction.

Prizes include an iPad, an Ohio State University University of Michigan cornhole board with signed merchandise, a bat signed by Prince Fielder, a ball signed by Miguel Cabrera and a one-week stay in a Charleston, S.C., condo.

There is no admission fee at the door so all proceeds are made from donations and bidding.

Khoury said, "We don't charge to get in. We hope you make a donation at the door, but you'll never see us pushing stuff. I mean, I might have a cute little girl running around selling wristbands that you just can't help but give her money, but we don't sit there and say, 'Donate, donate, donate!' We hope you come in and feel the love at the event and want to donate."

Last year's Acoustics for Autism event made about \$15,000 and a second concert with Pittsburgh-based Rusted Root made \$12,000.

Community partners also chip in for different supplies and prizes, Khoury said.

Last year, the nonprofit helped three or four families with treatment, therapy and other needs, she said. The criteria for receiving scholarship funds are available at [www.aboutprojectiam.com/scholarships.php](http://www.aboutprojectiam.com/scholarships.php).

Khoury stressed that volunteering helps give applicants an edge.

"My main plea to people, parents who are applying, is get involved with this charity. We don't ask for much of you; you know, volunteering for an event, or if you can't get out of the house, I've got plenty of things for you to do at home. There's a lot of grunt work that gets laid on my shoulders that I will happily delegate," she said.

Those wishing to help with Acoustics for Autism can contact Khoury at [info@aboutprojectiam.com](mailto:info@aboutprojectiam.com). To learn more and see a complete schedule, visit <http://acousticsforautism.com/>.

The Village Idiot is located at 309 Conant St., Maumee, and Buster Brown's is at 313 Conant St., Maumee. Acoustics for Autism starts at noon March 10 and runs until 2 a.m.

Tags: [Allen Spencer](#), [Anthony Beck](#), [Autism](#), [Bobby May](#), [Brian Bocian](#), [Chas Hill](#), [Darryl Robinson](#), [Dave Carpenter](#), [Isaac Snyder](#), [Jeff Stewart](#), [John Barile](#), [Josh Whitney](#), [Judge Gary Byers](#), [Kyle White](#), [Lane Smith](#), [Mike Merritt](#), [Nicole Khoury](#), [Pat Lewandowski](#), [Project iAm](#), [Scott Hayes](#), [Sean Lapan](#), [Sidney Marious](#), [Steve Knurek](#), [Village Idiot](#), [Zak Ward](#)

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Front row, left to right: Bobby May, John Barile, Nicole Khoury. Second row: Anthony Beck, Kyle White. Third row: Allen Spencer (seated), Zak Ward, Steve Knurek, Scott Hayes, Jeff Stewart, Mike Merritt, Isaac Snyder, Sean Lapan, Brian Bocian, Dave Carpenter, Judge Gary Byers, Sidney Marious. Back row: Lane Smith, Josh Whitney, Pat Lewandowski, Darryl Robinson, Chas Hill.