

Wortman family to raise funds for Walk4Hearing

BY HALEY BEHRE
THE COAST STAR

BELMAR — On Oct. 20, hundreds of volunteers — including one Belmar family — will take to the streets to raise awareness, and funds, for those living with hearing loss during the sixth annual Garden State-NJ Walk4Hearing.

Each fall and spring the Hearing Loss Association of America hosts the walk throughout the country, with thousands of people participating.

“Hearing loss is largely misunderstood, although it is a significant public health issue that is third in line nationally after heart disease and arthritis. It’s important to get the word out that this is a complicated condition that affects people of all ages and impacts

all aspects of everyday life,” Wayne Roorda, NJ Walk4Hearing chair, said.

In New Jersey, a walk will take place on Oct. 20 in West Windsor, in which the Wortman family, of Belmar, will be participating.

Maxx Wortman, 3, of Belmar, was born with hearing loss in both ears, and has been wearing a hearing aid since he was 5 months old.

Through the state’s early intervention system, Maxx attended Summit Speech School, in New Providence, where he learned to communicate using auditory and verbal skills, according to Erica Wortman, Maxx’s mom. Maxx does not know how to use sign language.

Maxx now attends Belmar Elementary School as a pre-k student.

With a hearing aid, Maxx is able to hear, but not fully, Ms. Wortman said.

Since Maxx was born, his family has been participating in Walk4Hearing under the team name Maxx Man. They have raised about \$8,000 in the past two years.

This year, team Maxx Man has raised about \$4,000 for the walk, with about \$380 of that money coming from a lemonade stand Maxx held in August.

Proceeds from the walk go, in portion, to the Hearing Loss Association of America and the walk site, with the remaining portion going to participating alliances and chapters of the participant’s choice.

Team Maxx Man has chosen to give a portion of their proceeds to Summit Speech School, Ms. Wortman said.

“Summit Speech School gave max a voice,” Ms. Wortman said.

The event will take place on Sunday, Oct. 20, in Mercer County Park West at Hughes Drive in West Windsor, New Jersey and follows a 5K [3.1-mile] route.

Walk festivities feature children’s activities, state-of-the-art technology including captioned announcements via smartphones, giveaways, refreshments, prizes, and more.

Registration begins at 10 a.m. and the walk starts at 11 a.m. For more information and to pre-register, visit www.walk4hearing.org. Walk teams and individual walkers from the Metro area are welcome. Same-day registration is also available.



COURTESY OF ERICA WORTMAN

Maxx Wortman, 3, of Belmar, was born with hearing loss in both his ears. To help raise awareness about hearing loss, Maxx’s friends and family have participated in Walk4Hearing for the past few years under the team Maxx Man.