

Wednesday, February 20, 2008

Band of Angels event benefits OU's OPTIONS Program

Rochester Hills-based Band of Angels, an international outreach organization dedicated to helping individuals with Down syndrome reach their full potential, announces it will host a charity event, Designs on Education, to benefit Oakland University's OPTIONS program for students with cognitive impairments. Designs on Education will be held on Thursday, Feb. 28 at the new Elle Salon and Spa in the Country Creek Commons Plaza at 4862 N. Adams Road in Oakland Township beginning at 6:30 p.m.

The event will be an evening of luxury and learning and is designed to raise money and awareness for peer mentoring to assist students in the OPTIONS program.

According to Cynthia Kidder, Band of Angels founder and CEO, Band of Angels is eager to support higher education for individuals with Down syndrome and other cognitive impairments, especially with a program so close to home.

"The Band of Angels mission aims to maximize the potential of persons with Down syndrome and much of that potential is harnessed through education," said Kidder. "At the local level, our young people have been the beneficiaries of Rochester Community Schools' championing of mainstream education for students with challenges in grades k-12. Now, with Oakland University's OPTIONS program, our students can continue their education in a safe, familiar environment that also supports education as a lifelong journey. Having peer mentors assist students in the OPTIONS program helps ensure its success."

The OPTIONS Program at OU is designed to provide a fully inclusive, age appropriate post-secondary education experience for students with mild cognitive impairments. Through a combination of classes specific to each student's individual learning needs, regular university course, campus clubs, social events and health and recreation activities, student with mild disabilities are able to continue their academic education in a college setting.

Designs on Education will feature appetizers and wine tasting as well as a fashion show featuring trendy clothing, jewelry, handbags, and eyewear along with the newest hair techniques. There will also be a drawing to win a gift from one of the event sponsors, which include local design leaders Aurum Jewelry Design, Elle Salon and Spa, Oakland Optometry, and Janet Varner, as well as Rochester-based Cose di Lusso Lifestyle Wine Boutique, the 4th Street Grille and national retailer, Vera Bradley.

Tickets to Designs on Education can be purchased online from the **Band of Angels** Web site, or by calling (248) 377-9308. Reservations must be made by Feb. 24.

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Created by CareTech Administrator (webservices@caretechsolutions.com) on Wednesday, February 20, 2008
Modified by CareTech Administrator (webservices@caretechsolutions.com) on Wednesday, February 20, 2008
Article Start Date: Wednesday, February 20, 2008