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## UA3/9/5 How 'Bout Those Toppers!

WKU President's Office

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*Introduction  
Regents  
Always*

**SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT**

**Wednesday, November 20, 2002**

**Western Kentucky University**

**Regents Room, Wetherby Administration Building  
9 a.m. CST**

**Gary A. Ransdell, President**

WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY IS PLEASED TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO ANNOUNCE THE COMMENCEMENT OF A NEW PROJECT TODAY: THE **KELLY AUTISM PROJECT**. THIS PROGRAM WILL BE HOUSED IN WKU'S COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES AND HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH A THREE-YEAR GIFT OF \$150,000 FOR INITIAL FUNDING **BY JOHN AND LINDA KELLY** OF BOWLING GREEN, A COUPLE WHOSE DAUGHTER HAS BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH AUTISM.

**THE LONG-RANGE GOALS OF THE KELLY AUTISM PROJECT ARE TO:**

- PROVIDE INSTRUCTION, INTERVENTION, AND SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS;
- EMPOWER FAMILIES AS WELL-EQUIPPED ADVOCATES AND GIVE THEM THE TOOLS AND STRATEGIES NEEDED TO EXTEND AMELIORATIVE (*A-MEEL-YA-RA-TIV*) PROGRAM PRACTICES INTO THE HOME; AND

- PROVIDE TRAINING AND OTHER RESOURCES TO PUBLIC SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND EDUCATORS WHO WORK WITH STUDENTS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS IN THEIR SCHOOLS.

THOUGH OTHER AGE GROUPS AND OTHER CLASSIFICATIONS WITHIN THE AUTISM SPECTRUM OF DISORDERS WILL EVENTUALLY BE INCLUDED WITHIN THE PROJECT'S SCOPE, THE INITIAL FOCUS WILL BE ON PREPARING YOUNG ADULTS WITH AUTISM, AGES 14 AND OVER, TO EFFECTIVELY TRANSITION TO A PURPOSEFUL, FULFILLING LIFE AFTER THEIR PUBLIC SCHOOL YEARS ARE OVER.

THE CURRICULUM OF THE KELLY AUTISM PROJECT WILL TOUCH SEVERAL EXISTING PROGRAMS IN MORE THAN ONE COLLEGE. INDIVIDUALIZED PROGRAMS FOR THESE YOUNG PEOPLE WILL STRIVE TO INCREASE INTERACTIVE SOCIAL SKILLS, COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION, OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECREATION AND LEISURE ACTIVITY, THERAPEUTIC VOCATIONAL SKILLS, AND ACCESS TO MEANINGFUL INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS, ALL FOR THE PURPOSE OF ENHANCING THEIR OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE BEYOND THE FINAL YEARS OF PUBLIC SCHOOL.

WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY IS GRATEFUL FOR THE SUPPORT OF JOHN AND LINDA KELLY, AND WE ARE EXCITED TO HAVE THE

OPPORTUNITY TO BEGIN THIS NEW PROGRAM THAT WILL PROVIDE A  
MUCH NEEDED SERVICE IN OUR COMMUNITY.