

## Angel Flight Aids Rare Disease Survivor

At 22, Michelle C., is a miracle walking. The oldest known survivor of Methylmalonic Acidemia (MMA), she considers every day a blessing.



**Michelle and her mom, Mary, team up in work, play, and the search for vital answers.**

MMA is an inherited disorder caused by a deficiency of several enzymes that help metabolize acidic wastes in the blood. The

build-up of these acids causes strokes, seizures, comas, and other serious health problems.

In 1998, Michelle underwent a kidney and liver transplant. But her body rejected the liver, necessitating another transplant surgery a year later.

### Deterred, Not Cured

The transplants were supposed to cure Michelle's MMA, but instead only deterred the disease process. Presently, Michelle goes through multiple scans and blood tests, and sees many specialty doctors.

While attending a medical conference several years ago, Michelle and her mother, Mary, met a doctor from the National Institute of Health (NIH), specifically researching MMA. Dr. Charles Vindetti is determined to find a cure for MMA and requested Michelle's participation in his study.

After losing two younger siblings to MMA, Michelle readily agreed, feeling "that being part of the NIH study would give her more purpose and would hopefully find the cure for other MMA children."

### Pilots Were 'Wonderful'

Michelle and Mary flew with Angel Flight last summer from their home in Michigan to NIH. Mary was hesitant flying in the small plane but her fears were soon put to rest. "All of the pilots involved were so wonderful," she recalls.

Since then, Michelle has graduated from high school and now works part time at a local bakery. She also aids in her mother's second-grade class once a week. She loves reading, traveling, and performing in her annual church musical at Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church.

### At Home on Stage

With four months of the year devoted to practice and preparation for opening night, she and her family enjoy the event as "a special, spiritual experience," her mom says.

On stage, Michelle feels at home with the other singers. When it's over she never walks away without a new friend.

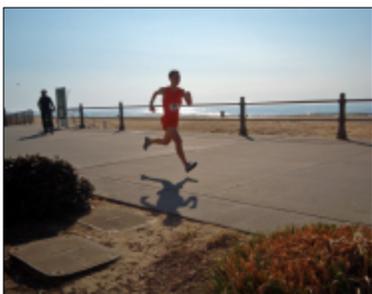
Michelle is fully aware of her disease, putting together all of her medications and preparing her dietary supplements every day.

Looking back on their Angel Flight experience and the pilots that helped them get to NIH, Mary says, "I admire them for the time they give to this program, using their own planes. What a sacrifice."



**Mark your calendar!**  
**AMERICA'S HALOS & HEROES**  
**October 6, 2007**  
**Virginia Beach Airport**  
**Fly-ins, barbecue, USO show...details in**  
**next issue**

## Run/Walk '07 'Big Success'



**William Garland finishes 2nd at 16:25**

oceanfront on March 10.

One hundred fifty-six runners and walkers lined up in start position the morning of the 5K race. The event is a fund- and friend-raiser for Angel Flight. This year's race netted over \$5,600. Major sponsors included Landmark Aviation, Food Lion, Farm Fresh, Freedom Ford, Long Jewelers, TI Associates, Inc., and Talbert and Bright.

Virginia Beach Mayor Meyera Oberndorf greeted the crowd and gave a brief history of Angel Flight, mentioning that her husband, Roger, is a volunteer pilot, and praising the organization for its service.



**Bayside Baptist cheerleaders take the spirit to the street.**

The race was hosted by Tidewater Striders.

Trophies and medals were given to the top three male and female walkers and the top male and female runners of various age categories.

Special drawings were held for pilots, runners, and the general public and included such gifts as a transceiver, gift certificates for fine jewelry, clothing, and two-night stays at the Sheraton Oceanfront and Courtyard Marriott hotels.

Astro DJ's kept things rocking with their upbeat tunes, and a cheerleading squad from Bayside Baptist Church's Upward sports ministry dazzled the crowd.

Event coordinator Sanovia Baxter said the race was a big success. "It was a bright and sunny day. I enjoyed the crowd enjoying themselves. We appreciate all the participants, friends and supporters."

Sunshine, blue skies and surf made the perfect backdrop for the blur of shoes crossing the finish line of the Ninth Annual Angel Flight Run/Walk held March 10 at the Virginia Beach



### Community Forum

## *Angel Flight Named Beneficiary In Charity Run, Fashion Show*

### **Pilots Sought for Charity Poker Run**

Alpha Eta Rho, a professional aviation fraternity at Ohio State University, Columbus, is holding a charity poker run on May 19 (rain date is May 26) to raise funds for Angel Flight Mid-Atlantic. All pilots are invited to participate.

Registered pilots will fly to a series of designated airports with the top three finishers winning quality prizes donated by sponsoring companies. Funky fun prizes will be awarded to all participating pilots. Proceeds from registration fees (\$50 per aircraft) and additional donations will be given to AFMA. Garrett Ackerman, a student at Ohio State, is the event's chief organizer.

For information about registering or to learn more about the event, call him at 614-543-0468 or 614-493-1290 (cell). Or, visit the fraternity website: <http://ahp.org.ohio-state.edu>. Online registration will be offered as well. Alpha Eta Rho is a nonprofit 501 (c)(3) organization.

### **Princess Anne Women Raise Fashion Funds**



**Gayle Paradiso and Madeline Winfrey present Suzanne Rhodes with check.**

A check given to Angel Flight for \$2,200 demonstrates that for Princess Anne Woman's Club, fashion is more than frills. The donation from the group's Jan. 27 event, Fashions by the Bay, was presented to Suzanne Rhodes, Angel Flight public affairs director, at the club's

April 10 luncheon meeting. "We are absolutely overwhelmed with their generosity," Rhodes said. "For every dollar given, 97 cents goes toward providing flight services to patients, so the money will do a great deal of good."

Fashions by the Bay was held at Westminster Canterbury on Chesapeake Bay, and featured winter and spring styles by Coldwater Creek as well as a luncheon. Attending were 237 women, with tickets selling for \$25. Club president Gayle Paradiso said, "We are very proud to have Angel Flight here. It so deserves recognition and support."