

Duxbury students create club to support ALS

BY AMY HARTIGAN
SPECIAL TO THE CLIPPER

When Duxbury High School junior Anniek van Aarem decided to get involved with ALS ONE, the nonprofit founded by Kevin Gosnell, a Hanover native diagnosed with ALS in May 2015, she wasn't sure what role she would take, but she was inspired by Gosnell's story and also by the love and compassion she witnessed in his wide circle of friends and family.

Gosnell set out to do one thing: change the lives of those affected with ALS by finding and funding not only a treatment for ALS, but a cure. Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease, is a rapidly progressive, invariably fatal neurological disease that attacks the nerve cells in the brain responsible for controlling muscle action, mostly in the arms, legs and face.

Gosnell passed away last

August, but his organization, which includes the collaboration of the world's top leaders in ALS, has raised over \$6 million in its first year.

The trajectory of Gosnell's path is an incredible one. After learning that there was no cure and no viable treatment for the disease, he refused to go quietly. He wondered why in the 75 years since Lou Gehrig was first diagnosed with ALS that there is no cure and no treatment for the disease.

As a small business owner, Gosnell had a history of making things happen. While still a young man, he started the paving company T&K Asphalt, in an effort to raise money for his college tuition. The company is now celebrating its 30th anniversary.

It was this gumption that led Gosnell to send out a request to the Boston-based leaders in ALS, who were all working on the same goal yet no one was sharing their work;

no one was moving the needle forward. At Gosnell's urging the researchers gathered at a conference room at Massachusetts General Hospital where they talked and shared their work. They agreed that it was time to come together and create a plan to put an end to this disease.

The team created a target date of 2020 to improve the care options for ALS while aggressively funding the shared-science plan that will ultimately find a cure for ALS. Gosnell knew his work would be of no benefit to himself, yet he put his faith in ALS ONE as a beacon of hope and progress for those diagnosed after him.

One day while in church last summer, van Aarem listened to Gosnell's story as told by his friends and family and was inspired by their passion. She then volunteered at last December's ALS ONE Snowball Gala in Kingston and was touched by the peo-

ple she encountered including ALS patients, their families and friends, the Gosnell family and doctors, scientists and volunteers from Boston and the South Shore.

Van Aarem decided to found a chapter of ALS ONE at Duxbury High School last fall. She wasn't sure if anyone would show up to her first club meeting, but she had high hopes. When 24 students attended the meeting, she was grateful for their interest and driven to create an organization that could impact change. The DHS ALS ONE Club, which meets on Wednesdays after school, plans to raise funds and spread awareness about the disease and has set a goal of raising \$10,000 by end of the school year.

In addition, the club will host presentations from people involved with ALS ONE, including ALS patients, doctors, nurses and scientists working on the care and cure. They are

also planning a field trip into Cambridge to visit a lab and meet with scientists, who are working on clinical trials. The students will also assist ALS ONE with calling campaigns and other activities.

The club's first event is to help ALS ONE with the second annual Polar Plunge on Saturday, Feb. 11 at 1 p.m. at Nantasket Beach in Hull. The cost to 'plunge' is \$25. The team is canvassing friends, family and local businesses to sponsor their efforts. There will be prizes for most creative costume as well as an award for 'Best in Plunge,' which will go to the individual who creates the biggest splash (style-wise or splash-wise).

To find out more about the Polar Plunge or join the Duxbury ALS ONE Club, email anniekvanaarem00@gmail.com.

Tuneful Brew Coffeehouse

Jay Psaros turns life experiences into music

BY JONATHAN PAPPALARDO
CLIPPER CONTRIBUTOR

On the first Friday of every month, from 7 to 9 p.m., the Harvey Assembly Room at the First Parish Duxbury Unitarian Universalist Church transforms into the Tuneful Brew Coffeehouse, a concert series in which patrons can dine on snacks like quesadillas and Lemon Poppy Seed Cake while listening to performances from local and regional musicians.

Weymouth native Jay Psaros, who founded PB and Jay Records in 2012, headlined the Feb. 3 show.

Singer/songwriter Psaros kicked off his folk music set with the gentle ballad "Whiskey In The Rain," which set the tone for his hour-long performance. He sang alone, backed solely by his acoustic guitar and warm everyman personality. Psaros held the audience, predominantly adults, in the palm of his hand. He shone brightest when sharing the personal stories behind his songs.

Psaros spoke of a gig at KKaties Burger Bar in Plymouth, which was attended by just one diner, a man who bought him a beer at the end of the night. It turns out this man had served in the Vietnam War and struggled to return to civilian life once he returned home. Psaros turned the experience into "The Orphan," his version of the veteran's story, and one of the more poignant moments of the evening.

A memorable portion of the show found Psaros reveal-



Singer/songwriter Jay Psaros played in Duxbury last Friday night at a monthly concert series at the First Parish Church.

Photo courtesy Round Magazine
ing his friendship with Raul Malo, the lead singer of Americana band The Mavericks. They met when Psaros was the group's opening act and traded cell phone numbers. The interaction was fodder for a yet-to-be titled composition, written to evoke the band's signature style. The song contains the line, "like a child on Christmas Day," which Psaros says is a point of contention with his girlfriend. She thinks the tune is a holiday song, while he does not. He went on to joke that he might just release it as his holiday single later this year.

Psaros displayed his candor by calling modern country music "garbage," an argument he cemented by citing a recent gig as the sideman in a Willie Nelson tribute band. He fur-

thered his stance, and received cheers from the crowd, with a performance of Townes Van Zant's "Pancho and Lefty," a No. 1 hit for Nelson and Merle Haggard in 1983. He appropriately concluded this portion with "The Night Rider's Lament," a cowboy classic he considers parallel to the life of a musician.

Psaros then detailed his cross-country journey, which led him down a 300-mile stretch of highway between Kentucky and New Mexico he calls "the road to nothing." He's also been camping, where his only food consisted of SPAM and macaroni and cheese. These experiences were fodder for "Skyscrapers," his ode to adventures without buildings and television screens.

He closed his set looking back, rather nostalgically, upon his time as Minstrel Jaybird at Medieval Manor in Boston. The gig, his first as a paid musician, found Psaros entertaining sold out crowds for three months straight when the venue was slated to close. He ended at the beginning, with the instrumental responsible for landing him the job.

The Tuneful Brew Coffeehouse, which also hosts an open mic before the main performer takes the stage, is located at 842 Tremont St., adjacent to the Duxbury Town Hall. Tickets are sold at the door for \$10 while children 12 and under are free. The featured performer on March 3 is Irish fiddle player Christine Hedden.

Open Minds Social Justice speaker series on Feb. 24

First Parish Church, Unitarian Universalist, 842 Tremont St., is holding the second event in its Open Minds Social Justice speaker series, which is designed to bring thought-provoking information and timely ideas to the South Shore community. Each evening will include stimulating speakers and time for questions and discussion. Events begin at 7:30. They are free and everyone is welcome. In case of bad weather, a notice will be posted at uudux.org.

Feb. 24: "Trans 101: Transgender Identities and Experience." A panel of speakers will share personal stories, explain terminology and speak to the relevance of transgender issues for the community.

March 24: "In Our Own Voice: Living Life with a Mental Illness." A panel of speakers from National Alliance on Mental Illness will relate powerful personal stories of living with mental illness, which will challenge assumptions and stereotypes.

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Duxbury Business Association February Members Meeting

Wednesday, February 15, 2017

5:30 pm to 7 pm

Duxbury Senior Center
Mayflower Street

You are invited to attend and bring along a guest!



Visit us at:
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