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NEWS RELEASE

**CHRIS FONSECA, COMEDIAN WITH CEREBRAL PALSY,
 HEADLINES UD'S DISABILITY AWARENESS WEEK**

DAYTON, Ohio — Physical differences divide, but laughter best breaks down those barriers.

Chris Fonseca, a nationally known stand-up comedian who has cerebral palsy, will test that theory when he headlines the University of Dayton's Disabilities Awareness Week, Jan. 28 through Feb. 1. For 14 years, Fonseca has used stories of his experience with cerebral palsy to reach audiences through laughter.

In cooperation with the honors and scholars program, the Institute for Pastoral Initiatives and the Center for Social Concern, the office for students with disabilities will welcome Fonseca and two nationally known thinkers on the issue of social inclusion. All events during the week are free and open to the public.

"We want people to look at disabilities access from a different perspective," said Lisa Rhine, director of the office for students with disabilities. "We want to get away from the simulations, get away from the common awareness programs. We want to raise the bar. We want to engage the faculty in scholarly discussion about what it means to have a disability."

The Disability Awareness Week schedule of events includes:

- Monday, Jan. 28, at 7 p.m., the PBS production of "Look Who's Laughing," featuring Fonseca, will be shown on Flyer TV on campus.
- Tuesday, Jan. 29, at 6:30 p.m., UD music therapy students will perform at the Marianist Heritage ice cream social in the Kennedy Union Ballroom.
- Wednesday, Jan. 30, at noon, Robert Bogdan, professor of cultural foundations of education and sociology and director of the social science doctoral program at Syracuse University, will conduct a faculty exchange in the Ryan C. Harris Learning Teaching Center Forum at noon. The center is located on the lower level of Roesch Library on campus. Bogdan will present "Freaks, Monsters, and Beggars" at 7 p.m. in Sears Recital Hall in the Jesse Philips Humanities Center.

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- Thursday, Jan. 31, at 8:30 p.m., Chris Fonseca will perform in the Kennedy Union Pub.
- Friday, Feb. 1, at 3 p.m., Linda Michaud, associate professor in the departments of physical medicine and rehabilitation and pediatrics at the University of Cincinnati Medical Center, will present "Social Inclusion for People with Disabilities" in Sears Recital Hall in the Jesse Philips Humanities Center.

Other events include a monthlong Flyer TV movie marathon, featuring films about disabilities or starring actors or actresses with disabilities. Films include *As Good as It Gets*, *Edward Scissorhands*, *Forrest Gump* and *The Green Mile*. Students and community members will read books with a disability theme to Children's Center students.

"We want people when they get through with the week to think beyond physical access when they think about disabilities," Rhine said. "Physical architecture does not create accessibility. It's the people who create accessibility. A ramp is not enough. How do we create a strong campus community by recognizing the gifts of each individual?"