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**HEADLINE:** ITHACA O Maggie Hickey is a 2-year-old child who lives in Dryden and has a big smile, a happy demeanor and a rare genetic condition that could be fatal for her.

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**BODY:**

Her parents, Rob Hickey and Erin Sheldon, know that Maggie's condition, Angelman Syndrome, is all too often misdiagnosed and mistreated because most people don't even know it exists.

With the help of state representatives Barbara Lifton and James Seward, Maggie's parents hope to change that.

On Thursday, Lifton and Seward announced that they had passed resolutions in both the state Assembly and Senate that calls for Saturday, May 21, to be known as Angelman Syndrome Awareness Day. The same day a large walk to raise funds to combat the syndrome will be held in Liverpool and other areas in the United States.

"A lot of families are not finding the answers they are looking for," Sheldon said. "It sounds so much worse than it is. It is just a small piece of Maggie."

Sheldon said there are only about 1,000 diagnosed cases of Angelman Syndrome in North America, but the actual number is much higher because children who have it are typically misdiagnosed with epilepsy or cerebral palsy. The symptoms of the syndrome include delayed childhood development, feeding problems, sleeping disorders and a very happy personality.

The rare genetic condition was first identified by Dr. Harry Angelman in 1965.

"A lot of parents would have thrown up their arms and said 'Fate has dealt us a tough blow,'" Seward, R-51st District, said. "You have channeled your energies - not only to be wonderful parents - but to also help your own daughter and all who have Angelman Syndrome."

"This will help to make sure more New Yorkers, doctors and therapists will become aware of this," Lifton, D-125th District, said.