Sensory Calming Room

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The excitement of athletic events can often cause overstimulation for people with sensory issues. That’s why a sensory calming room has been added to WKU home football games.

Amy Bingham takes us inside in this week’s View from the Hill.

WKU’s National Alumni Board of Directors set a goal to make alumni events more neuro diverse with a focus on the autism community. Once they put their heads together, the end result happened very quickly.

 “The great thing about a sensory calming room, it doesn’t have to be fancy.”

Using items from the Suzanne Vitale Clinical Education Complex..

The IMG Sports Marketing bus now doubles as a mobile sensory unit.

 “It’s just a place that a person who’se overstimulated who might just be a little anxious by all the activity going around can just come and self regulate back to a normal anxiety level.”

National alumni board member Amy Hardin says the unit came about very quickly after a fellow board member suggested collaborating with IMG.

 “Joe Dan Beavers, the CEO of Lifeskills said I don’t know if this will work but I have a great relationship with IMG Hilltopper Sports Marketing and they have a bus that’s always on South lawn that I don’t think they use.”

That was in August and by the second home football game, the unit was up and running.

 “Both personally and professionally, it was great moment to see this collaboration.”

For Amy Hardin, it IS personal…her son J.W. was diagnosed with autism nearly four years ago.

 “We brought him to the game last week. It was the first time this season it was such a relief to have this place.”

 “my son is very sensitive to noise and to know we had this space for him it was fantastic and we were actually able to stay through half time of the football game.

All because of a campus wide partnership…

 “It’s the WKU Alumni Association, Lifeskills, IMG Sports Marketing and the Suzanne Vitale Clinical Education Complex.”

And a mom on a mission…

 “I’m just a mamma who wants to be a voice for her son when he doesn’t have one and be that advocate for the community.”

Hardin says the Diversity and Inclusion Committee is now looking at ways to have a sensory area inside Diddle Arena for basketball season.

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

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