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News

The News-Herald

A Heritage Newspaper
Twice Weekly Publication



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Fund-raiser set for ill 4-year-old

By Jennifer Mitchell, The News-Herald

PUBLISHED: October 27, 2004

SOUTHGATE — Leah James seems as if she's a typical 4-year-old.

On the outside, family members say the Livonia resident is active, full of energy and she loves to play.

But it's what is on the inside that ails her.

Leah suffers from a childhood brain stem glioma. She was diagnosed July 22 with the inoperable tumor.

Doctors are trying to control the disease with radiation and chemotherapy, but the possibility of survival is slim, her family said.

Leah has an 8-year-old sister, Kylie, who, like the rest of her family, has trouble dealing with the possibility of losing her little sister.



"It's hard," said her grandmother, Catherine James of Dearborn Heights, said. "She has her good days and bad days, just like her parents and the rest of us."

Leah's parents, Philip and Karen, are on leave from work while they try to find a cure for their youngest child.

The 4-year-old's last radiation treatment was Oct. 7.

An MRI test scheduled for Nov. 30 will tell the family whether the radiation has shrunk the tumor.

"The bad prognosis is there's only a 1 percent chance

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that it won't come back," Catherine James said. "We are praying for a miracle."

Kelly James of Trenton is Leah's aunt. She said that, at best, radiation is only a temporary solution.

While the family prays, Leah's parents continue to search for another answer.

"They are looking into all types of alternative treatments," Catherine James said. "They are constantly on the Internet and talking to different doctors."

However, potential solutions don't come cheap.

A non-toxic chemotherapy alternative offered by a Texas doctor can cost up to \$20,000 for the first session and an additional \$7,200 for each following month.

A pasta dinner fund-raiser organized by Kelly, Catherine and many other members of Leah's family is slated for Nov. 1 at Crystal Gardens in Southgate.

They are hoping the event will help with the mounting cost of Leah's care.

The dinner runs from 5 to 10 p.m. and the banquet center is at 16703 Fort St.

A disc jockey will entertain the crowd with music, and a raffle and silent auction will be held.

Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$10 for children 12 and younger.

For tickets or more information, call Kim Cislo or Connie Pischke at 1-734-281-7364, JoAnn Pischke at 1-313-291-8876 or Catherine James at 1-313-292-2264.

Donations also can be mailed to 23644 Irving, Taylor, MI 48180. Checks should be made out to the Leah James Gift of Life Fund.

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