

Mother's life inspires her son's charity

Foundation aids families affected by cancer

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Michael Hockney decided to honor his mother's life in the moments after her death.

Rosemary Hockney made a mission of helping poor families in metro Detroit, even through the pain of colorectal cancer and the fear of losing her battle with it.

When that moment came June 28 and she was gone, her son thought of the local families ravaged by cancer and struggling financially.

His answer to their need, the Rosemary A. Hockney Memorial Foundation, is planning its first big fund-raiser Friday in Warren.

"The reality of it is, at some point in time, we're all going to be affected by cancer or know someone that is," said the Macomb Township resident, who works for a technology firm. The foundation is designed to give grants for tuition, medical bills, or other costs a family faces while one or more of its members fights cancer. Donations have reached \$5,000. One \$1,800 grant already has helped a Clinton Township couple keep two daughters in private school.

Veda Roberts heard about the foundation through the tuition coordinator at St. Thecla Catholic School in Clinton Township. Roberts' husband is in remission from Hodgkin's disease. He took a year off from his steel-working job during the illness, and he continues to have neurological problems.

"We're just struggling always to catch up," Roberts, 41, said. "We always seem to be paying back-bills instead of new bills."

Hockney said his mother is his inspiration. Her generous spirit began when an anonymous donor paid for his and his siblings' Catholic school education. She helped support poor families for the rest of her life as if she were repaying that debt of kindness, he said.

Hockney is learning the challenges of mounting a nonprofit. He just received nonprofit certification from the state. And he's planning this fund-raiser.

The event runs from 7 p.m. to 1 a.m. at the Fraternal Order of Police Christopher M. Wouters Lodge No. 124, 11304 Fourteen Mile Road. More than 150 raffle prizes and auction items have come from charitable foundations, including those of sports superstars Gordie Howe, Steve Yzerman and Rasheed Wallace. For information, call 586-783-7738 or go to www.rosehockneyfoundation.com.

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