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10-Mar-05

The Rosemary Hockney Foundation Creates a Caring Village

Rosemary Hockney's generous spirit lives on in the Foundation that bears her name. "An amazing spirit" is how Michael Hockney remembers his mother, Rosemary. Seven months after the 71-year-old mother of eight succumbed to colon cancer, Rosemary's spirit lives on in the foundation that bears her name.

The Rosemary Hockney Memorial Foundation began with a promise that a bereaved son made soon after losing his mother in July 2004. "Mom was unique" Hockney explained, "She touched so many lives; I wanted to continue her work." Rosemary lived a busy life, giving birth to eight children in twelve years. After an anonymous donor made it possible for her children to attend parochial school, Rosemary's gratitude, along with her strong empathy for others, prompted her to seek out children who needed help. In the early 1970's, Rosemary became involved in "Project Erica". Assisted by Sharon Tavi and her best friend Diane Melton, she organized a large community garage sale using the proceeds to send a young epilepsy patient for treatment to Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland. Other successful fundraising projects followed. Always quiet and unassuming, Rosemary's life was one of selfless determination to help others.



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When cancer struck Rosemary in 2003, her spirit and will to live energized those around her. Her oncology nurses became part of her extended family and today remain involved in the Foundation. Robin Sanderson, a life long friend, co-chairs the 501(C)(3) nonprofit corporation, working with members of her own and the Hockney families. Volunteers fulfill Michael Hockney's goal of continuing his mother's work, at minimal cost.

Michael was stunned by the financial burden his mother's final illness caused his parents. After his mother's death, Michael made a commitment to help the less fortunate as his mother had, deciding to focus on helping entire families touched by cancer. Particularly concerned with children, either as cancer patients or as the secondary victims when a parent is diagnosed, Michael formed a foundation that would become a "village" of caring people.

The Rosemary Hockney Foundation offers two kinds of grants to families affected by cancer. The first provides scholarships for children whose families are experiencing cancer-related financial difficulties. The second is through financial grants that directly pay the household bills of the families in need. Since its inception, the Foundation has covered the funeral expenses of a 12-year-old cancer patient, paid the rent and utilities of a seriously ill single mother and helped a young mother bring her children to their grandmother before her death.

Hockney has been surprised and pleased with the public response to his efforts. "I am amazed at the people who are getting behind our Foundation," he shared. Detroit Lions player Damien Woody donated two all expense paid trips to Walt Disney World in Florida. Bob Manning of The Detroit Sports Gallery in Roseville donated framing and sports memorabilia for the Foundation's first fundraiser held last November in Warren. A web designer from New Jersey donated the Foundation's web site (<http://www.rosehockneyfoundation.com/>) and General Motors employees are contributing by donating the proceeds from a March bowling event.

The Hockney Foundation is now collaborating with the Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute to identify patients and families in need. In December 2004, Michael contacted Sharon Cure, the Director of Oncology Patient Services at the Institute's Patient & Family Support Services program. Sharon invited Michael and the members of the Foundation's board to attend the Institute's annual holiday party for patients and families. Michael and his Foundation colleagues arrived with gifts for each of the children attending. "It has been thrilling to get to know Michael and his board members." Said Cure. "I'm very impressed with the Foundation's focus on making a difference for children whose lives are affected by cancer. It is wonderful to know that you can do more than just listen to the patient's story," she added. "Michael Hockney is proving there is somebody who can make a difference."



Detroit Lion Damien Woody extended a caring hand to cancer patient Zachary Shaffer and his family by sending them on a trip to Walt Disney World