

Community

Mystery still surrounds MS

By LISA BOONSTOPPEL-POT
The Herald

One day, almost 20 years ago, while Sandra Hentschel was walking around her university campus, she experienced a numbness and burning sensation in the palms of her hands and the soles of her feet and she knew she was experiencing the first signs of Multiple Sclerosis.

Today, Mrs. Hentschel can no longer walk on her own since her form of MS, called slowly progressing, has gradually weakened her brain's ability to control the nerves that enable us to walk, talk, and see among other important bodily functions.

Being a student studying physiology and occupational therapy, Mrs. Hentschel knew all there was to know about MS but she couldn't believe what her occasional bouts of numbness and blindness indicated.

Once the disease was diagnosed, she thought what a waste all her education was, but being a fighter, she decided to work as long as she was able. She reached that point five years ago after giving seven years of her life to helping patients with diseases at Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital.

"I worked until I couldn't stand up," said Mrs. Hentschel in an interview at her home Friday afternoon. She decided to share her story about her disease to encourage people to buy carnations which will be sold this weekend in local grocery stores and liquor stores to raise money for the MS Society. It's the first time in recent years that the carnations will be sold in Halton Hills.

A few years ago, Mrs. Hentschel herself sold the flowers to raise money but because of her illness, no longer has the strength or stamina for this task.

These days, she is very careful of what she does because she's at the point where if she falls, she can't get up. Her husband of 15 years is around to assist her in the evening hours, but during the day, she can only manage to do the dishes plus volunteer work at the Bennett Health Care Centre at Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital.

"It is depressing," she admits. "It's embarrassing when you can't look after yourself anymore."

She finds sharing these feelings with a group of MS patients in Burlington helps her cope with the disease.

Since Mrs. Hentschel has the slowly progressing kind of MS, she had to deal with the fact that someday she may become completely immobile but that's something no one can predict. Fortunately, she is not experiencing pain.

She's eager to promote knowledge about MS. Extensive research about the disease and her own personal experience make her a reliable source of information about the disease which she says is a common disease in North America and in Europe. As well, two-thirds of MS sufferers are women.

But there's a lot of mystery surrounding MS since doctors haven't been able to find a cause or cure for this, most common of neurological diseases.

Money from the sale of carnations goes towards funding research. Some of the funds also stay in the community to aid people who suffer from the disease.

Carnations will be on sale Friday and Saturday for \$3 donations.

Bouquets and singles of fresh cut flowers as well as silk flowers will be available.



A sufferer of the disease, Multiple Sclerosis, Sandra Hentschel of Georgetown, knows how important this weekend's annual carnation fundraising campaign is to raise money for MS research. (Herald photo by Lisa Boonstoppel-Pot)

Give youngsters a break

What is Kidney Dialysis? Patients suffering from kidney failure must have their blood

purified by a dialysis machine every second or third day. The unit is the size of an apartment

size refrigerator which means the patient must stay immobile for three to four hours while blood flowing out is purified and returned.

Some patients must travel two-and-a-half hours to the nearest hospital that provides the dialysis treatments.

Why do we need Kidney Dialysis vacation camps?

When a family member must have dialysis three days out of every week just to remain alive, what does the family and patient do to have a change of pace?

Family members could take turns going away, or they could abandon the patient to a hospital for two weeks. But what of the patient whose limited ability and activity already strains self-confidence - then again a family with this situation, by need and nature, pulls closer together and are far less likely to go anywhere alone.

Camp Dorset is a summer vacation camp equipped with a kidney dialysis centre. Nurses from Ontario hospitals give up their summer vacations to volunteer at the clinic. The medical program is strictly monitored.

The recreational facility consists of family cottages made available to patients for very little cost.

The children's dialysis camp is run by the Kidney Foundation of Canada.

The child patient is taken by bus, along with a paid medical team, recreation director and all medical equipment for a two-week session each summer, at various vacation camps.

They set up on arrival and dismantle before departure.

These children have an opportunity to enjoy a vacation with others in the same situation while their families are relieved of their care temporarily.

How good it makes one feel to be able to say "my son or daughter is away at summer camp" when that same son or daughter must pass up so many activities the rest of us take for granted the rest of the year.

This Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the Georgetown Miracle Mart Plaza, the public can help ease the pain for kidney failure patients.

Members of the Georgetown Lioness Club will be at the plaza asking for donations in a "Kilometre of Coins" blitz, with proceeds collected going to help fund Kidney Dialysis Camps for children.



'The Kidney Kid' has a big fan in Norval resident Duncan Firth who couldn't resist giving the costume, worn by his mother Norma, a big hug. Norma Firth, president of the Georgetown Lioness Club, will be modelling the costume Saturday to attract people to Miracle Food Mart in Georgetown where the Lioness's will be collecting coins. The group is attempting to gather a "Kilometre of Coins" which will be donated to the Kidney Foundation for kidney dialysis vacation camps for youngsters. (Herald photo)



Forge exhibition

Forge Studio Gallery in Terra Cotta held a Spring Celebration '91 exhibition last Saturday in recognition of the gallery's re-opening for the summer months. The artists who have work on display at the gallery include, (left to right) Monica Johnston, geometric pottery; Paulus Tjiang, revers glass painting; and Agnes Olive, Raku fired clay. Absent is Vladymyr Ruzlyo, mixed media. (Herald photo)