

# Liver donor sought for child in crisis

By Judith Doner Berne  
staff writer

A tiny West Bloomfield boy with a bright smile and a diseased liver waits with his parents and sisters for the telephone call which could give him a chance at life.

Bruce Sharp, 2½, is a victim of biliary atresia — the destruction, inadequacy or absence of the main bile ducts through which bile travels from the liver to the intestine.

Infants with biliary atresia are unable to excrete bile. They develop cirrhosis, a fatal disease. These children often are dead by 2 years of age, according to the Children's Liver Association, based in Dallas.

Bruce, his skin yellowish and his body undernourished, has cirrhosis. His stomach is distended, caused by en-

larged veins. He has been in and out of Mott Children's Hospital, Ann Arbor, for a number of problems because his immune system doesn't counter even mundane illnesses properly.

BUT BRUCE, who has a common blood type and who is an active 2-year-old between bouts of illness, has been declared a prime candidate for a liver transplant at Children's Hospital, Pittsburgh.

People in the greater West Bloomfield community are determined to raise the funds and services to help him get it.

The transplant process has become less risky because of a new, experimental anti-rejection drug called cyclosporine. Hospital figures show a success rate of 70 percent on its 49 most recent liver transplant patients, according to

Oakland County public health nurse Betty Schnetz.

But insurance or state-funded programs do not cover the operation, which is considered "experimental."

Bruce Sharp Sr. was laid off in August from the job he held for 14 years at Paragon Steel Co. Novi. Shirley Sharp performs light shop work for Enamatum Co. Novi, but isn't paid for the time she must take off when Bruce is ill.

The transplant and associated transportation and housing range from \$60,000 to \$150,000 in cost.

A FUND-RAISING drive is under way, spearheaded by Eric Mobey, community services director for Roosevelt Elementary School, and Schnetz, who services the West Bloomfield School District.

Contributions can be made directly to the Bruce Sharp Fund, c/o Roosevelt Elementary School, 2005 Cass Lake Road, Keego Harbor, 48010.

"I never thought it was so easy to get people involved," Schnetz said. "It's a pretty good community. The schools are real rallying points."

For the Sharps, proud people who never thought to ask for help themselves, the community's response has been overwhelming.

"People we don't even know are willing to help," Mrs. Sharp said. "I could never have organized anything like this. Even little kids are involved."

"Without Eric Mobey, Betty Schnetz and our pastor (Howard Haas of Walled Lake Church of God), we'd be in trouble," said Sharp, who is frustrated by his inability to reclaim his old job or find a new one.

"I help out around the house, but I want to be a breadwinner in the family. It gets you disgusted."

DESPITE THE daily threat that Bruce will die before a suitable transplant can be found, the atmosphere around the Sharp house is upbeat.

Bruce deftly rides around the house on a toy electric motorcycle, which his dad got him for Christmas. A new puppy, Suzie, scurries into the well under the living room coffee table to get out of his way.

Sisters Lisa, 19, an Abbott Middle School eighth grader, and Suzanne, 7, who attends Scotch Elementary School, help their dad get the lawn primed for spring. They visibly dote on their brother, whom they call Bruce.

But the children, too, and their parents' full-time care and concern for Bruce take a toll.

Lisa recently won a West Bloomfield School District writing award for an essay, expressing her feelings about her brother's disease and its impact on her family.

"I DIDN'T FEEL like anyone really understood how I felt," she wrote, when

her parents were with Bruce in the hospital, and she and her sister stayed with separate relatives.

"My family was split every which way, but the right way."

Once Bruce returned home, "we started to live almost normally again, but I will always remember in the back of my mind that he will always have a fatal illness."

"I've learned to live one day at a time and to take care of him. I've also learned that my parents are not perfect. They cry, and they can't spread their love so easily when they're with Bruce."

## Video game worth \$3,500 taken from drug store

A Ms. Pac-Man video game valued at \$3,500 was taken from Smith's Rexall Drugs, 27702 Eight Mile in Farmington Hills during the early morning of May 11.

Farmington Hills police were called to the drug store at 8:28 a.m. after a store employee noticed the glass had

been knocked out of one of the store's windows.

Police have no suspects in the breaking and entering. They believe thieves entered through the broken window. A panel on the store's front door was missing and a top glass panel was shattered.

## Farmington Symphony performs in Lansing

The Farmington High School Symphony Band will perform on the steps of the State Capital Building in Lansing. The May 13th noon concert is part of the "Month May Music Program," sponsored by the Bureau of Facilities-Property Management Division in cooperation with the Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association.

throughout the state will perform at various sites during the month.

This is the second consecutive year that a band from the Farmington Public Schools has been selected to perform. Last year the Harrison High School band was chosen. While in Lansing the students will also tour the Michigan Supreme Court, Michigan Historical Museum and the Michigan State University campus.

## Farmington Y robbed

Continued from Page 1

ed by Farmington Hills police in the YMCA lobby, police said. One youth is in Children's Village, Pontiac, in the custody of juvenile authorities. The other two are in their parents' custody.

The youths entered the YMCA through a window on the north side of the building. About \$315 was recov-

ered. Police don't know how much was taken from the money boxes of the center's dollar bill changer and video games dollar bill. Damage to the dollar bill changer, videogames and a safe in the YMCA administrative office was estimated at \$1,000.

Two youths were stopped by police as they ran through an empty field east of the YMCA.

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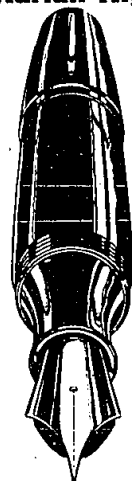
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