

Tourney to aid leukemia research

BY SUSAN DEMAGGIO
STAFF WRITER

Sarah Fox, 12, credits the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital for her second chance at life.

The Grosse Pointe Farms youngster was diagnosed at 2 years of age with acute lymphocytic leukemia. Her battle against the deadly disease became the focus of her doctor, her family, her neighborhood and a community of caregivers at the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tenn.

In support of the 32-year-old miracle-working center for children, a Birdies For Babies benefit running through the U.S. Women's Open July 18-24 at Indianwood Golf & Country Club in Lake Orion. The championship will put the number of birdies shot up against dollars pledged for St. Jude's.

"Sarah is our third child and we are so grateful that she is still with us," said Jane Fox, recalling the shocking February of 1985 when her youngest daughter was found to have leukemia during a blood test for what she and her husband thought might be an appendicitis.

"Our doctor insisted we take Sarah to St. Jude hospital for medicines that were experimental and, at that time, were only administered at St. Jude's. He urged us to go against our gut feelings, which were to keep Sarah as close to home and familiar surroundings as possible."

Willing to undergo anything to save their young daughter's life, Jane, husband Bill, and Sarah boarded a plane for Memphis.

"My family moved into our house to take care of our other children, Chris and Abbey, James, the youngest, had not been born yet. Since Bill is a devel-

oper, he was able to arrange for a condo for Sarah and myself. Sarah's treatments would be outpatient and we'd need a place to stay in the evenings. It was a difficult time, but our doctor, a family friend, assured me that Sarah needed me most at this time, that the other children would be fine."

Jane said she braced herself for the worst but was relieved to find St. Jude "a happy, upbeat, positive place" instead of the somber, depressing center she envisioned a hospital for little ones with cancer would be. The staff gave her hope and she rushed off to a nearby Kmart to buy curtains, bedding and a VCR to get her and Sarah through the tough times ahead.

"In the blood room, the staff is so warm and caring," Jane said. "They remember each patient's name and ask lots of questions about favorite things and happy memories. They're wonderful, positive and hopeful. They help you forget about the pokies."

Sarah went through her share of "pokies," blood tests, spinal taps, hair loss, eight-hour days of IV-administered chemotherapy and eight-hour nights of heaving and crying, but Jane says that's all in the past.

"Sarah was so brave and strong," Jane said. "I'd hold her and tell her it's OK, she was getting rid of all the bad stuff, all the bad cells, and you know what? She did it!"

Five years after Sarah ended all "medicine protocol," she remained "free" of any diseased cells. Jane credits the dedication and wisdom of Dr. Gaston Rivera of St. Jude's.

"He was wonderful," she said. "He encouraged us through it all. He said Sarah might be a low-risk patient because she was female, the disease was diagnosed very early and it was not T-



WILLIAM HANSEN

Happy ending: The Fox Family of Grosse Pointe Farms counts among their many blessings daughter Sarah's victory over leukemia. Standing from left: Jane, Bill, James, 8, Chris, 18; seated from left, Sarah, 12, the family dog, Maizie, and Abbey, 15.

cell. On the anniversary of Sarah's fifth year off medicine, I sent Dr. Rivera Sarah's framed picture with the inscription, "Thanks for giving me a second chance at life."

Today, Sarah proudly takes her place among the four very sports-minded Fox children, playing soccer, ice hockey and the piano. She also plays saxophone in the Brownell Middle School band. She's a good student and says she's "committed to a career help-

ing children who have cancer, or marine biology."

Jane explained that Sarah's treatment, airfare, meals and a place to stay, if they needed one, were completely paid for by St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital. The Fox family never received a bill for anything from the hospital.

"Our health insurance covered some

See TOURNEY, 7

Indianwood celebrating a renaissance

BY JANICE TIGAR-KRAMER
SPECIAL WRITER

To an 8-year-old in the 1940s, the clubhouse at Indianwood Golf & Country Club in Lake Orion looked like a fairy-tale castle.

In its heyday, the prestigious club was frequented by golf legends Al Watrous, Tommy Armour, Walter Hagen and Horton Smith.

The Scottish-style course, designed by Englishman Wilfrid Reid in the mid-1920s, was the site of Michigan's first PGA championship in 1928.

"My uncles were members in the 1940s and '50s," said Bloomfield Hills businessman Stan Aldridge. "I used to tag along when my dad and uncles played. As a boy, the clubhouse looked beautiful, just like a castle."

Aldridge, whose background is manufacturing, bought Indianwood in 1981 from Mrs. Carl Rubelman, whose family (Rubelmans) owned it since the ear-



Aldridge

ly 1940s. The plan was to restore the course and clubhouse — plenty neglected over the years — and sell it in a year or two, Aldridge said.

Bob Cupp tended to the overgrown golf course, mainly by removing old trees, lengthening holes, adding bunkers and designing an irrigation system. The course's rolling hills, heavily grassed bunkers and tall rough were groomed and left intact.

The par 72, 6,944-yard course has a tough 18th hole, whose 30,000-square-foot green is one of the largest in the country.

Indianwood's assistant golf pro Chris Wilson, now 27, played the old course at age 7.

"The course was in pretty bad shape for about 12 years, but it's come a long way in a few years. It's tougher to play now that the tall grass is back on all but six holes," said Wilson, whose grandfather still plays the old course.

Gene Sarazen won the 1930 Western Open at Indianwood and Ed Furgol, the 1954 U.S. Open champion, devel-

oped his game there.

"It had been a great golf course and I knew it could be again," said Aldridge, a non-golfer. "The easy part was bringing in the carpenters and others to start restoring the clubhouse and grounds. I had to learn and understand the game."

Aldridge, whose office overlooks the 18th green, was a quick study. In 1985, he bought land across the street for a second 18-hole course and membership started to climb.

The new course, designed by Cupp and former U.S. Open winner Jerry Pate, opened in June 1988. It's surrounded by an upscale development of single-family homes and cluster condominiums.

"The economy was beginning to come back and everything started to work. Once you have 36 holes, everything works because there's less overhead and more membership," he said.

Since Aldridge took over, club membership has climbed from 50 to 600.

"The Western Open started at Indianwood, but over time the course just

went downhill," said Orion Township supervisor Doug Brown. "By now, no one would be playing there, so we're definitely grateful Stan's taken over. We're hoping organizations will be using the dining room for their dinners and special events."

Also in 1988, daughter Kelly Aldridge Osgood headed the clubhouse expansion, which added a grill, locker space and a swimming pool. She's also championship director for the U.S. Women's Open at Indianwood July 18-24, an event the club hosted for the first time in 1989.

Indianwood also is the home of the Michigan Golf Hall of Fame.

Aldridge is pleased that historic Indianwood is experiencing a well-deserved renaissance: "So many of the golfing greats played here. At one time, Indianwood was among the top 10 clubs in the United States. All it needed was upgrading and some TLC. What we've done in four or five years should have been done over the last 50 years."