

Donations last chance for 8 children

BY LARRY PALADINO
STAFF WRITER

Last week, Chris, a 7-year-old second-grader from Birmingham, found out his leukemia was in remission.

That should be good news. It is good news, except... he was told that before, but it didn't last.

"To keep him in remission the best chance is for a bone marrow transplant," said his mother, Janine, during a news conference last week at the Beverly Hills Racquet Club.

It was held to drum up support for a massive area blood and bone marrow drive spearheaded by the Phoebe Foundation of Beverly Hills, in cooperation with the J.P. McCarthy Foundation of Bloomfield Hills, the Southfield-based Karmanos Cancer Institute and the Southeastern Michigan Chapter of the American Red Cross.

Chris' disease, which is usually fatal, was diagnosed Nov. 30, 1992, but through drugs and chemotherapy, it went in remission for four years, his mother said, "then relapsed Oct. 17. But now, it's in remission again."

He was off medication for nine months when the relapse hit,



she said. The cancer had only been found in his bone marrow before, but suddenly it was spotted in Chris' spinal fluid.

"Now it's a whole new ball game," said Janine, who asked that her last name not be used.

Chris' father, also named

Chris, said his son has been so sapped by his illness he barely got out of bed for two weeks.

"His mind is sharp, but his body is not willing," the senior Chris said.

The boy's classmates and the staff at Harlan Elementary

Phoebe Yauck, right, was just 3 when she died last June of a rare form of leukemia after efforts to find a compatible bone marrow donor for a transplant failed. Elizabeth, left, a 9-year-old who lives in Rochester, is among many children who could benefit from the special holiday blood and bone marrow drives going on.

School, meanwhile, have been terrific, the parents said.

"Christopher hasn't gone back to school yet," his mother said, "so they have been sending him tapes of what they've been doing, like their Halloween party, and they even went Trick or Treating for him. The principals and teachers were out to see him. And in science class they had a crash course in what leukemia is all about."

Chris is just one of eight children being spotlighted in the "Save A Life Sunday" blood and bone marrow drive from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Dec. 15 at the Beverly Hills health club, as well as Karmanos' Wertz Center in the Detroit Medical Center.

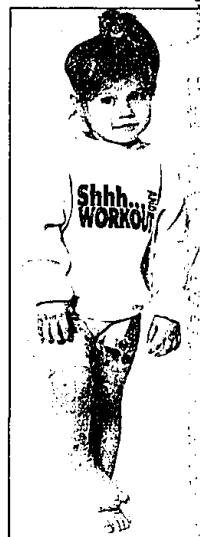
Another of the children is 9-year-old Elizabeth of Rochester, who has neuroblastoma, which

affects nerve cells. The others are: 19-month-old Samantha of Warren, who has leukemia and needs a marrow match; Allen, 8, of Goodrich, also with leukemia; Lamice, 10, who has leukemia and Woodrow, 11, and BreYanna, 5, of Detroit who both have sickle cell anemia; and Gregory, 3, of Lenox, who needs heart surgery.

Need is large

"Between the two places, we're hoping to get 20,000 people to donate blood and 6,000 to register for the National Marrow Donor Program on the 15th," said Tom McCarthy, manager of the racquet club and president of the Phoebe Foundation. The foundation is named after Phoebe Yauck, the daughter of

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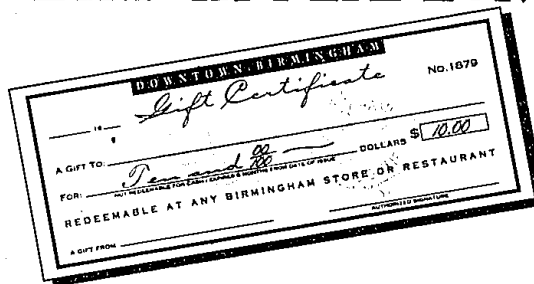
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