

Pesces help fund for retinal surgery

BY JOHN HALL
CORRESPONDENT

A memorial fund has been established in the names of Carlo, Sabrina and Melissa Pesce, the three children who, along with their father, Livonia jewelry store owner Marco Pesce, and grandmother Maria Vergati, were murdered in their Livonia home during a robbery in late December.

At a Tuesday press conference at Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, Fabrizio Pesce, the brother of Marco, spoke about the "Light of Life Memorial Fund," which will benefit Italian infants with retinal disorders.

Pesce was joined by Beaumont ophthalmologists Dr. Michael Trese and Dr. Antonio Capone. Also present at the news conference were Teresa Nascimbene, president of the National Association of Italian Immigrant Families and Philippe and Lorena Bernet, whose infant son Nathan had retinal surgery the previous day at Beaumont Hospital.

Nascimbene arranged the Bernet's visit. The memorial fund will allow Italian children to come to Beaumont for treatment - thus carrying on the charitable work of Marco Pesce.

"I want to thank Beaumont Hospital for allowing us to be here today and I want to thank everyone in the community for their tremendous support," said Pesce. "This has been a tremendous experience for me (to continue Mario's work). And it has been the greatest Christmas present."

"I hope that something good comes out of this tragedy. This money will be allocated for something good."

"My brother was involved in many charitable causes and this (retinal surgery) was a cause I chose to get involved in because of the work that Teresa has been doing."

BEAUMONT DOCTORS

Trese, who specializes in treating eye diseases affecting prematurely born babies and young children, visited Italy



Presenting the "Light of Life Memorial Fund" program were (from left) Dr. Antonio Capone, Beaumont ophthalmologist; Dr. Michael Trese, Beaumont ophthalmologist; Fabrizio Pesce; and Teresa Nascimbene, of the National Association of Italian Immigrant Families.

along with Dr. Capone where they were able to select some infants who required retinal surgery at Beaumont. Trese founded the Association for Retinopathy of Prematurity and Related Diseases in (ROPARD) in 1990. The association is dedicated to eliminating problems of low vision and blindness in children caused by premature birth and retinal disease by raising money for clinically relevant research projects.

"We have established a pediatric retinal service at Beaumont that is second to none," added Trese. "And I have had the good fortune of working with Teresa for a decade

now. I have had the opportunity to see many babies from Italy. The doctors in Italy have greatly supported the kind of care that we would like to see everywhere.

"The fund will allow Dr. Capone and I to train some doctors to go back to Italy to do the same type of things that we are doing here."

"Teresa also had high praise for the work of Ms. Nascimbene. "Teresa basically adopts all of the children who come from Italy. As a humanitarian, it would be hard to find anyone nicer."

Dr. Capone also specializes in the treatment of eye diseases affecting prematurely

born babies and young children. He has lectured extensively throughout the U.S. and the world and is recognized as a leader in the areas of pediatric retinal surgery, submacular surgery, macular degeneration, proliferative vitreoretinopathy and diabetic retinopathy.

"One of the more common problems of children who are born prematurely is that scar tissue grows in the eye and its scarring winds up detaching the retina," added Capone. "What we typically will do is to enter the eye with small incisions less than a millimeter wide and remove the scar tissue; to do whatever possible to

allow the retina to reattach itself."

GIVES THANKS

Nascimbene, referred to affectionately as "Mother Teresa" by Fabrizio Pesce, also thanked Beaumont Hospital for its work with Italian infants.

"I want to thank Dr. Trese and Dr. Capone not only for what they are doing here, but for the time and expense of coming with me to Italy where we were able to visit many children," she said. "From that experience they were able to select children to bring over here."

"It is important that our chil-

dren be treated and that they feel secure - so that (children and family) know everything will be OK."

Trese added a special recognition to Fabrizio Pesce, in light of the recent extraordinary events. "I'd like to thank Mr. Pesce and his family for even having the strength to think about anyone else in this time of tragedy."

The fund is taking donations in memory of the Pesce children at: Light of Life Memorial Fund, 35002 Selkirk Road, Livonia, MI 48150-1217. For more information on Beaumont Hospital programs visit www.beaumont-hospitals.com.

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