

Recent grad's heart is failing

Transplant sought for 18-year-old

By Doug Funke
staff writer

The prayers and well wishes of an entire community have followed an 18-year-old Troy woman to the Stanford University Medical Center in Palo Alto, Calif.

Colleen Wynne, who took ill suddenly during the Christmas holidays, could be facing a heart transplant operation which may be necessary to save her life.

Wynne, who graduated from Athens High School last June, was undergoing tests at the Stanford University Medical Center this week.

A decision on the suitability of a transplant is expected soon, a hospital spokeswoman said.

Wynne and her parents — Lois and John — flew to the West Coast last Thursday in an air ambulance.

Friends and family members were stunned at the seriousness of the illness and the suddenness with which it struck.

Wynne was "full of vigor and vitality" when she returned home last December after completing her first term at Michigan State University, said Beverly Kirtek, a family friend.

"SHE HAD gotten a part-time job, came home on a Friday, and, from what I understand, went to bed," Kirtek continued. "Later, she said, 'Daddy, you better take me to a doctor.'"

Dr. Rolando Mateo, a neighbor, described Wynne's ailment as cardiomyopathy, a condition in which part of the heart enlarges and fails to contract.

The exact cause of the illness isn't known, Mateo said. Possibilities include a virus or a genetic factor, he added.

Wynne was treated at both South Macomb Community Hospital and Sinai Hospital before she was transferred to Stanford.

A spokeswoman at Stanford said 292 heart transplant operations have been performed there since 1968. Eighty-one percent of the new heart recipients have survived one year, 71 percent at least two years since 1980, the spokeswoman said.

"It's impossible to tell a prognosis," she said. "It depends on the severity of the illness."

The medical center monitors hospitals nationwide in an effort to move as soon as a donated heart becomes available.

"IT'S VERY, very hard to get a good match," Mateo said. But, he added, "One good thing about a heart transplant now is they're able to control rejection with new drugs."

Wynne was active and popular while a student at Athens. She was a cheerleader, served on the student council, was on the homecoming court and was a member of the pom-pom squad and the band.

She's just the All-American girl next door," Kirtek said. "I think she had a 3.9 (grade point average) her first semester at State. She's just amazing. Just a beautiful little girl."

"She was a very popular young lady," recalled Athens Principal Donald Gaviglio. "She was full of life, bubbly, happy all the time. Everyone loved her."

Troy's Chamber of Commerce will coordinate a Colleen Wynne Heart Fund to help defray expenses which are piling up for the Wynnes.

The family has medical insurance, but the benefits aren't expected everything, including the costs of a family member staying with Colleen in California.

An eight-month recuperation period is anticipated if she has a transplant, Mateo said.

CONTRIBUTIONS may be sent in care of the Chamber of Commerce, 155 West Big Beaver Road, Troy, 48064. The Troy Rotary Club has already contributed \$1,000, said Eileen Turner, executive director of the chamber.

The Wynne family seems to be holding up well, Kirtek said.

"They're very, very supportive of each other," she said. "Their voices, after they got to Stanford, sounded so excited about what they saw there. They are optimistic. They are hopeful."

Colleen, too, is hanging on even though her condition has weakened markedly, Kirtek added.

"Her mom and dad said she really tried to look out the window (while flying to California) so she could see what's happening," Kirtek said.

"Before she left, I said to her, 'It looks like a go,' Kirtek said. "She whispered, 'I'm excited.'"

"All you want to do is pick her up and rock her."



Colleen Wynne, 18, a June graduate of Athens High School in Troy, was flown by air ambulance to Stanford University Medical Center for testing. A decision on a heart transplant is expected soon.

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Oakland judge honored

A certificate of appreciation from the Oakland County Probate Court has been awarded to Oakland County Circuit Judge Steven N. Andrews.

The Bloomfield Hills resident was recognized for his "outstanding and distinguished efforts" in support of the probate bench during his tenure as circuit court chief judge in 1982 and 1983.

Probate Court Chief Judge Norman H. Barnard

presented the certificate to Andrews Feb. 21 at a joint meeting of the circuit and probate judges.

The certificate of appreciation was the third in a series of honors bestowed upon Andrews for his efforts as chief judge.

He also received a plaque Feb. 14 in recognition of his leadership as chief judge. An award was presented to him Dec. 8 by the Oakland County Bar Association.

Adoptee rap group starts

A "rap" group for adult adoptees has started meeting 8-9:30 p.m. Mondays.

A series of sessions will run until April 9. Members meet to explore thoughts and experiences

and to meet others who were adoptees in infancy and childhood, said Linda Yellin, an adoptee.

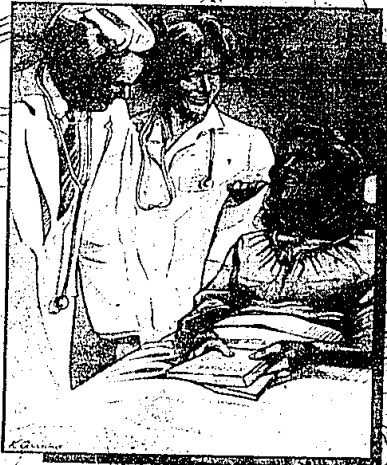
Meeting place is Leo M. Shulman & Associates Psychological Services,

751 Hendrie Blvd., Royal Oak. Price is \$5 per session.

Information about the group, and about a prospective teen discussion group, is available from Yellin at 541-2660.



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