

COMMUNITY LIFE

➤ CYSTIC FIBROSIS FIGHT ◀

Strides help Hills family cope

The Cystic Fibrosis Foundation's annual fundraising walk is later this month. A Farmington Hills family talks about what it's like to cope with the condition.

By SUZ DUCK
STAFF WRITER



Susan Keen knew something was wrong.

Her pediatrician should have detected daughter Erin's cystic fibrosis at birth, but didn't.

Finally, at nine months, the Farmington Hills girl was diagnosed, after having 8-12 messy dinners per day. Some children suffer constipation — the opposite problem.

Erin's skin tasted salty. When she sweated, she had a salty white cast to her skin, Susan said.

Susan had her suspicions. It took a bout with pneumonia, and a different pediatrician, to finally have the correct tests ordered and to definitively diagnose the condition as cystic fibrosis. It has affected Erin's lungs and pancreas.

"That darn pediatrician didn't believe me," Susan said. "We must keep her lungs as free from infection as we can."

That involves daily treatments twice a day for the 6-year-old.

Cystic fibrosis is the number one genetic killer of children and young



SHARON LEMKE/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

United front: David, Erin and Susan Keen of Farmington Hills have worked together on Erin's battle with cystic fibrosis.

See STRIDES, 15A



BEVERLY BROWN

Shop owner puts stock in romance

After getting news my fiance was diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's disease, I thought I was in for the challenge of my life.

After three years of taking care of him I was sure whatever road I traveled would be easy street. Was I wrong? I opened up Touch of Romance in the Downtown Farmington Center on May 3, 1994, and it made me realize one thing: There is no easy street.

I'm grateful to have three understanding children who realize I have to work six days a week and can't attend all their school functions and ball games and don't get sick of eating pizza twice a week for dinner.

While my husband was ill, I took a leave of absence from my job to take care of him. During that time, I watched too many talk shows and listened to people complain about their love life and marriage. So many were hoping to get back to the spark they once felt or keep the love they do feel. After my husband died, I wanted to offer things or ideas to people to feel the love and romance and the big fairy tale I had felt. Touch of Romance was born.

The people I have met so far have been great. I like working with the public and have a good time while I'm working. I've learned about their relationships and even get to play social worker at times.

They are very receptive to the store and sometimes just stop by to say hi when they are in the area.

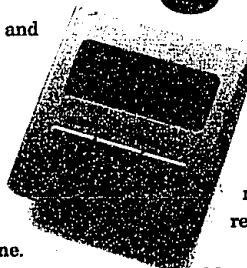
Others have been more of a challenge to get

See ROMANCE, 15A

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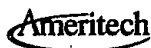
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