

# Health & Fitness

The Observer

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Kim Morrison, 734-953-2111, (kmorrison@oe.hoimcomm.net)

on the web: <http://observer-eccentric.com>

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## MEDICAL BRIEFS

### Arthritis lecture

Mission Health Medical Center in Livonia will hold a lecture titled "Arthritis: Hip and Knee Problems," from 7-9 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 29 at 37595 Seven Mile Road (at Newburgh). This program is presented by David Markel, M.D., and will focus on treatment options such as pain management and current arthritis medications. To register call toll free (4877) 345-6500.

### Reflexology seminar

An introduction seminar to reflexology and master acupressure points, The Joy of Reflexology, will be held from 1-7 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 9 at The Joy House in Farmington. Open to everyone. Learn the principles of reflexology, five point foot adjustment, specific reflex points and management for special afflictions. Instructors: Certified Massage Therapists Christine Meinke and Susan Meinke, C.E.U.'s available for Massage Therapists and Nurses. To register call (248) 473-0624.

BY KIMBERLY A. MORRISON  
STAFF WRITER  
kmorrison@oe.hoimcomm.net

As Denise DeRaud played Chinese jump rope with her daughters, she could feel her strength coming back. It was a significant event for the 38-year-old Redford resident, who was just three months out from a bone marrow transplant.

The weakness she felt in her arms and legs was a reminder of the physical limitations she still faced, but, mentally, the value of the moment was overwhelming.

She was alive and being a mom to her two young daughters - something she cherished more than anything.

#### Turn of events

What DeRaud considered to be a "normal" life with her husband, Mark, and daughters, Sara and Colette, was turned upside down in January when she was diagnosed with an aggressive precursor to leukemia.

Denise had myelodysplastic syndrome (MDS), which had already transformed to acute leukemia, said her physician Dr. Voravut Ratanatharathorn, associate pro-

fessor of internal medicine - University of Michigan.

"Patients who had the type of leukemia transformed from MDS are not curable with conventional chemotherapy. The only curative treatment is to perform a bone marrow or stem cell transplantation," said Ratanatharathorn.

Within a month she was undergoing an initial treatment of chemotherapy to destroy diseased bone marrow. She was back in the hospital at the end of April preparing both her mind and body for a bone marrow transplant.

One of DeRaud's two sisters, Annette Russo of New York, tested positive as a perfect match to be a bone marrow donor. The morning of the transplant, May 10, DeRaud, Russo and their other sister, Michele Rice of Canton, gathered quietly in her hospital room to hold hands and pray.

"When we got to U of M, we went straight up to Denise's room and waited a few minutes for her to wake up. Then I told them both that we needed to hold hands and meditate together, the three of us - in order to gain strength," said Russo.

The women reluctantly separated so

that Denise could get the rest she was desperate for after a grueling bout of chemotherapy while Russo went to another floor at the hospital and spent the next six hours having her bone marrow harvested.

During the procedure she experienced numbness in her limbs and mouth area, a common occurrence in bone marrow donors. As the marrow is being harvested, the donor is intravenously administered calcium that is stripped away during the collection. Her numbness, however, became more profound, and doctors feared they would have to stop the procedure because she was experiencing one of the worst cases of hypocalcemia (too much calcium for her body to absorb) they had seen.

"After that, I pretended that I was okay," recalled Russo. "After they unhooked me, the doctor had to come check me out.... He wanted to keep an eye on me for a few hours - I didn't care.... I lasted through the entire collection."

After all the cells were harvested, the bone marrow transplant team from the bone and marrow stem cell transplant



Strong bond: Denise DeRaud (front) and her sisters Annette Russo (back) of New York and Michele Rice of Canton (right).

Please see DENISE, D8

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