

Healing walk

Couple steps in to help leukemia fundraiser

By Audrey Levine
Staff Writer

After the tragedy of losing their daughter, Charles and Cecelia Ingraham, of Devonshire Court, decided to devote their time to assisting an organization that helped them during their darkest hours.

And now, Mr. Ingraham, a member of Hillsborough Fire Company No. 2, is hoping his fellow firefighters will give their support as well.

In memory of their daughter Tatiana, who died of leukemia in 2005, Mr. and Ms. Ingraham are participating for their fifth year in the Embrace Kids Foundation's annual Heel to Heal Walk on Oct. 4 in Piscataway.

Embrace Kids, a nonprofit organization based in New Brunswick, provides funding for services for patients and families dealing with cancer and blood disorders, while also supporting research opportunities to find cures.

"I wanted to invite all of my brothers from the Hillsborough Fire District to support this worthy cause to help the children and in memory of our daughter," Mr. Ingraham said of the 1- to 5-mile event, which also features activities for children and a barbecue. "So I decided to form a special team this year."

Called "Firefighters Assist Stricken Tots" (FAST), the team name is a takeoff on an acronym used for fire service that usually reads "Firefighters Assist and

Search Team," Mr. Ingraham said.

"My fellow firefighters (and I) changed it to be appropriate for the walk and our cause," he said.

At this point, Ms. Ingraham *See WALK, Page 2A*

said, there are about 25 firefighters participating, but anyone is welcome to join in the coming weeks.

"In the past few months, I went to all of the fire companies in Hillsborough," Mr. Ingraham said. "I passed out pamphlets regarding the event and asking them for their support."

The cause and the foundation itself are especially dear to the Ingraham family, having seen what it does for those dealing with leukemia after their daughter was diagnosed in 2003 at age 16. Despite seemingly being on the mend in 2004, she relapsed in March 2005, and succumbed in May 2005 after failed treatments for the leukemia and bouts with two different types of fungus that attacked her lungs.

"(The foundation) was an integral part of the family when our daughter was diagnosed with T-cell at the age of 16," Mr. Ingraham said. "They helped us out tremendously as they do all the children and their families that are being treated at the Bristol-Myers Squibb Hospital for Children and the PSE&G

Specialized Children's Hospital."

While at the Bristol-Myers Squibb Children's Hospital at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick — both in 2003 and 2005 — Ms. Ingraham said her family saw first hand what the Embrace Kids Foundation does for those who are suffering.

For Christmas, Thanksgiving and Valentine's Day, among other holidays, Ms. Ingraham said, the foundation hosts special dinners and parties, in addition to celebrating Mother's Day and Father's Day in honor of those parents whose children are dealing with the disease.

"And if a family's in need, they help with mortgage, utilities (and anything else)," she said, adding that she and her husband have been volunteers at several of the celebrations over the years.

Mr. Ingraham said he is glad to be participating in the walk, and is looking forward to having the support of his fellow firefighters, having been a firefighter himself for the past 28 years.

"Let's face it, the more the merrier (for the walk)," he said. "It's for a great cause, and it's fun and rewarding."

For more information on how to donate to the organization, or to participate in the walk, visit the Web site at embracekids.org.

To be part of the FAST team, contact Mr. Ingraham at fire37chief@yahoo.com, or Ms. Ingraham at ceceliaagnes13@yahoo.com.

