



FAITH AND CHARITY



Jennifer and Imad Ghandour are fighting for awareness of hypertrophic cardiomyopathy. Their sons, Anthony (left) and Eli, have the disease. (Mirror photo by Traci Fritz)

Woman helps her kids, others with cardiomyopathy

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Charity and fashion will mix in November when the Children's Cardiomyopathy Foundation and Neiman Marcus hold their "Holiday Style Benefit."

The fashion show/fundraising event was organized by Sterling Heights resident Jennifer Ghandour, whose two children have been diagnosed with hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, one of four forms of the heart disease.

"(The event) benefits the foundation that will eventually benefit my kids," Ghandour said. "It is for community awareness as well. People don't know what (cardiomyopathy) is, but it is out there."

"A lot of children have this disease but unless they have a severe case of it, it never gets diagnosed."

Ghandour's involvement with the Children's Cardiomyopathy Foundation started when her youngest son was born.

Eli, 3, was diagnosed at birth as having a severe form of the disease. Doctors checked her other son Anthony, 5, because the disease is hereditary, and found that

he too had it.

Since hypertrophic cardiomyopathy affects heart rate, neither boy can play sports or play during recess.

"We have to be extra careful with them as far as monitoring their activities," Ghandour said.

While searching online for other families whose children have the disease, Ghandour found the Children's Cardiomyopathy Foundation's website. She discovered that Lisa Yu, the founder of the Children's Cardiomyopathy Foundation, held a fashion show in New Jersey with the help of Neiman Marcus and raised \$10,000.

Ghandour then contacted Neiman Marcus and started planning a similar event.

The first event she planned was "Fall into Fashion," held on Sept. 12. The charity brunch/fashion show was held at the Zodiac Cafe at Neiman Marcus' Somerset Collection location.

Because of space limitations, only 50 people could attend. Still, more than \$5,000 was raised for the Children's Cardiomyopathy Foundation.

"It went great," Ghandour said. "Everybody really showed their

support and said they wanted to attend the November event."

"Holiday Style Benefit" will be held from 6-8 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 18, at the Neiman Marcus in the Somerset Collection in Troy.

Attendance costs \$100 per person, but unlike the first event, there is no limit to the number of guests. Cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, a fashion show and a silent auction are planned.

More than 200 vendors have donated auction items so far, Ghandour said. Some of those items include a Louis Vuitton handbag, \$1,000 worth of merchandise from Neiman Marcus, tickets to the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, a basket of toys worth over \$500, a TAG Heuer watch from Ahee Jewelers and luxury suite stays at the Townsend Hotel in Birmingham and the Whitney Hotel in Detroit.

To attend the event, RSVP by Nov. 5 by calling Ghandour at 586-247-2142. As with the first event, all proceeds will go to the Children's Cardiomyopathy Foundation.

For more information on cardiomyopathy or to make a donation, visit www.childrenscar-diomyopathy.org.