

Family forms cancer charity in their mother's memory

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When Marjorie Buckskin was diagnosed with uterine cancer, her family spared no expense in finding her the best treatment possible.

Her children pursued multiple doctor appointments, trips to San Francisco and treatment plans for her. But their financial sacrifices took a toll.

Nearly three years after their mother's passing in 2017, her five children – Terri, 45, Mandie, 43, Christina Hernandez, 42, Roger Jr., 39 and Ashley, 33 – are creating a support system for others experiencing uterine cancer, the fourth-most-common women's cancer in the U.S., according to Cancer.Net.

To raise funds and spread awareness, they formed the charity Marjorie's F.A.I.T.H. Angels, which will host its first fundraiser Dec. 6.

"The financial hardship we had to face, from lodging to making sure she got the treatment she needed ... we just wanted to start this organization to help other women who may go through uterine cancer and are stuck in that emergency situation," said Mandie Buckskin, the second-eldest sibling.

"We could help them to make sure that they have a place to go, or if they just need gas money."

They chose the charity's name because, they said, people who donate to the organization will become angels to those whom they support.

The siblings will host their initial Marjorie's F.A.I.T.H. Angels event on Friday to celebrate the memory of their mother, raise funds for those with uterine cancer and spread awareness of the disease. The fundraiser will be at Howonquet Hall, 101 Indian Ct. in Smith River, from 5-7 p.m., with an entry fee of \$10.

At the gathering, they will serve food from Art's BBQ, provide giveaway raffle prizes, listen to music and have a station for people to take photos that will remind them of the evening.

Local businesses and friends have donated raffle items for the event, the proceeds of which will be used to transform the charity into a nonprofit organization. All of the additional funds, said Mandie Buckskin, will be placed into an account until they hear of a local uterine cancer patient in need.

"Basically, it's just a meeting to gather and get the word out that we just want to be a help to families in the future, and to get us started and to get us rolling," she said.

Through their organization, the siblings hope to raise awareness and educate women about uterine cancer and ways to detect it early. During their mother's battle, they received support from the Cancer Crushers in Eureka, which led them to Rose Gale-Zoellic of the Breast and GYN Health Project, based in Arcata.

Their long-term goal is to have a home in San Francisco where families can stay during treatment, given that lodging was one of their biggest costs during their mother's treatment. They chose to pursue treatment in San Francisco because their mother would have had to wait up to two months before receiving treatment in Eureka.

"We had to move hotel rooms frequently for two months. That was a lot on our mom," Mandie said. "We just want to eventually help families so they don't have to go through that, so that they can be stable, so they can just work on the healing process."

For the siblings, Marjorie's F.A.I.T.H. Angles is more than a good service. It is a tribute to their mother, a woman who devoted her life to service and her Christian faith, said Mandie Buckskin. She worked for the Yurok Tribe, served on the Tribal Council in the late 1990s and spent much of her time volunteering.

"(She) did a lot in the tribe, so basically, we want her memory to continue on and to let people know that she would still want us to help others if we can," she said. "She loved the people so much and she loved Jesus ultimately."

For more information, call 707-951-5565.