

Dinner to benefit research into disease

By Ruth Silverman | Daily Herald Correspondent

Everything is a challenge for Buffalo Grove resident Ilyce Randell and her family, but the latest challenge could double donations to Canavan Research Illinois, just in time for Canavan Disease victim Max Randell's 10th birthday on Saturday.

Canavan Research Illinois will hold its ninth annual Charity Ball Saturday at the Hyatt Deerfield Hotel, 1750 Lake Cook Road, Deerfield, in honor of Max's birthday.

"We are ecstatic that Max will reach his 10th birthday," said his grandmother Peggy Shapiro-Nyeholt of Des Plaines. "Thanks to research our organization has funded, he is doing well."

An anonymous philanthropist who likes to fund small charities through his foundation has pledged to donate \$18,000 if donations from new donors reach that amount.

"As of today we are \$4,469 away from achieving our goal of raising \$18,000 to obtain that matching funds grant," said Shapiro-Nyeholt last week.

She and Max's mom arranged for an early birthday gift when they asked Gov. Rod Blagojevich to designate October as Canavan Awareness Month in Illinois.

He has already responded with a certificate that they hope will call attention to the rare degenerative brain disorder that leaves children unable to crawl, walk and speak.

Dr. Paola Leone, who is doing research on Canavan and related disorders, will be present at the fundraising dinner. It is her work that identified the missing gene responsible for the problem.

"I'm so excited that we are closer to a real cure," Leone said.

Featured at the auction before the dinner will be four VIP tickets to a taping of the popular game show "Deal or No Deal," to be taped in Culver City, Calif.

The silent auction preview begins at 6 p.m., while dinner and the raffle start at 7:30 and dancing goes until midnight.

To order tickets, call (847) 222-0736. Tickets are \$70. Tickets for children under 3 are free and for those under 12 are \$15. All donations to Canavan Research Illinois are tax deductible.

To learn more about Canavan Disease, go to the Web site at www.canavanresearch.org.