

Have cake and help others, too

By Ruth Gesmer Silverman
Daily Herald Correspondent
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And help Canavan research at the same time...

Cakes and other desserts will rise to the occasion for Mother's Day weekend, to help Canavan Research Illinois bring in funds to further efforts to find a cure for the disease.

"After a scheduled fund-raiser fell through, we realized we had to do something else and Pete came to the rescue," said Ilyce Randell, of Buffalo Grove. She's talking about Pete Panayiotou, owner of The Continental Restaurant, 788 S. Buffalo Grove Road, Buffalo Grove. He called on two of his dessert suppliers, Eli's Cheesecakes and Concept Food Brokers, to lend a hand.

From Friday through Sunday, those who dine in or take out single desserts or whole cakes, 100 percent of the cost of those desserts will be donated to Canavan Research Illinois.

The organization has already funded new treatments that will give children who would otherwise die by the age of 10, a chance at life.

Ilyce and Mike Randell's 7-year-old son, Max, has been the beneficiary of such treatment, when he received gene transplants directly into his brain. The treatments were so successful, the normal progress of the disease, which causes destruction of brain tissue, has been changed. He has not become blind. He can use the heel of his hand to push the controls on his wheel chair; read some words; utter some syllables; laugh at jokes; and he can use a modified computer.

Now, researcher Dr. Paola Leone, is pursuing a variety of promising new options, including using developed brain stem cells that she believes will have an even more dramatic outcome for Max and others with the disease. She is the director of the Cell & Gene Therapy Center and Associate Professor in the Division of Neurosurgery at UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, in Camden, N.J.

For details on the disease visit www.canavanresearch.org or www.savingmax.com or call (847) 222-0736; Call The Continental to reserve your selections, at (847) 459-4095.