Written by CAROL POMEDAY
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After second bout with cancer, Rauwerdink feels good, places trust in God

For their children's spring break, Steve Rauwerdink, his wife Kim and their three children went to Disney World in Orlando, Fla.

The family was scheduled to go last year, but Rauwerdink was too sick to go, recovering from surgery to remove a malignant tumor and six inches of his colon.

Last year is one he would like to forget.

Rauwerdink, then 44, underwent five weeks of intense chemotherapy and radiation prior to the surgery in March and another four months of chemotherapy afterward.

The aggressive approach was taken when Rauwerdink was diagosed with colo-rectal cancer on Dec. 22, 2010, following a routine blood test.

“It showed up in the blood work,” Rauwerdink said. “It was very scary.”

After completing treatments in August, he was declared cancer free, but had to report for checkups every three months.

At his first checkup on Dec. 22 — one year to the day after his initial diagnosis — his blood work again was abnormal. A CAT scan showed cancer in his liver.

“I was told the odds were not good,” Rauwerdink said.

However, after studying CAT and PET scans, his oncology team was more encouraging.

“The next day, they told me if the cancer is isolated and they don’t find it anywhere else, they’ll give me better odds,” Rauwerdink said.

The cancer, a small portion of his liver and his gall bladder were removed in January.

Initially, Rauwerdink was to undergo chemotherapy, but his blood work was good after the surgery and his doctors decided against additional treatments.

“That’s fine with me. Whatever they tell me to do, I’ll do. I trust them,” Rauwerdink said.

“Really, I guess what I’m doing with this whole thing is putting it in the Lord’s hands. There isn’t one day I’ve been given that He hasn’t given me. I’ve always believed that, but this put my faith to the test.”

He will meet with his oncology team every three months. A CAT scan is scheduled for Saturday, April 14, and blood work will be done Wednesday, April 18.

He’s prepared to accept what God gives him, Rauwerdink said, but then he looks at his wife and children — Angela,13, Renee, 9, and Sam, 2.

“I keep thinking, ‘I’m not done yet.’ I want to be around for them,” he said.

Rauwerdink, a 1985 graduate of Cedar Grove-Belgium High School, his father Rich and brother Troy operate Rich-line Builders in Cedar Grove, which does mostly new construction. Business has been slow.

Rauwerdink is also driving trucks for a transportation company.

The family’s insurance is through his wife’s employer.

To help pay medical and living expenses, Faith Reformed Church in Cedar Grove will hold a

brat fry and silent auction from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, April 14.

Auction items are on display this week at the church, 243 S. Fourth St. Bids may be placed until 5 p.m. Saturday.

Among the auction items are one-night stays at Blue Harbor with six water park passes, a Green Bay Packers autographed football, a Charles Woodson autographed No. 21 Packers jersey, Milwaukee Brewers tickets and parking passes, a recliner, pizza and broasted chicken once a month for 12 months, photo session, University of Wisconsin jacket, golf packages, a deer mount, hunting packages and a firearm.

Food and music will be available. Rauwerdink and his family plan to attend the fundraiser.

Donations may be made to the Steve Rauwerdink Benefit account at Oostburg State Bank.

For more information, call the church at (920) 668-6725.

Image Information: CANCER FIGHTER Steve Rauwerdink, his wife Kim and children Angela, 13, Sam, 2, and Renee, 9, will be at a brat fry and auction Saturday, April 14, at Faith Reformed Church in Cedar Grove to raise money to help pay Rauwerdink's medical expenses.