

Toddler awaits lifesaving liver

Family of S.F. boy born with disease aim to raise \$40K for post-transplant care

By Tamara Barak
Staff Writer



The family of Christopher Padua of San Francisco is requesting donations so that the 1-year-old can receive a liver transplant. — Courtesy photo

As a one-year-old boy described as “a little fighter” waits for a lifesaving liver transplant, those who love him are rallying support to raise money for his family’s expenses.

Christopher Padua, of San Francisco, was diagnosed with biliary atresia when he was 3 months old. The progressive and potentially fatal disease caused the boy to be born without bile ducts. After surgery and numerous hospital stays, his doctors at UCSF Medical Center have recommended a liver transplant, said Cecilia Wong, a family friend.

Wong is working with the family and national organization Children’s Organ Transplant Association to raise \$40,000 for Christopher’s post-transplant care.

Although the family has insurance, the funds raised will cover the time away from work his parents, 25-year-old escrow assistant Jenille Rimando and 26-year-old administrative assistant Jason Padua, must take to care for Christopher. It will also help defray the nearly \$1,000 per month the family will spend on some 20 medications.

Christopher and fraternal twin Evan were born June 1 last year. The boys were premature and spent time in the neonatal intensive care unit. When they were released, Christopher’s mother noticed his skin carried a yellowish tint.

“I thought it was a little jaundice from being in the NICU. It wasn’t going away, so during his 3-month immunization visit the doctors did a blood test,” Rimando recalled. The next day at work, she got the dreaded call.

“It wasn’t good,” Rimando said. “We were admitted to UCSF that day.”

If Christopher does not receive a transplant, his liver will continue to deteriorate and eventually fail. His illness interferes with his ability to gain weight and grow, and his parents supplement his diet with a feeding tube at night. His twin and 5-year-old brother are both healthy.

Despite his medical woes, those who know Christopher say he is a lively, happy boy.

“He’s got a lot of personality. He flirts with all the nurses in the hospital when he’s there. He’s got these big eyes. Watching him grow has just been amazing,” Wong said.

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Fundraising event will be held tonight

A fundraising party will be held for Christopher Padua tonight at Space 550, located at 550 Barnevald St. in San Francisco. The event will begin at 10 p.m., and all proceeds will be donated to transplant-related expenses.

Donations to Christopher’s transplant fund can be made in person at any Wells Fargo Bank branch location using account No. 9421478612, or mailed to the Children’s Organ Transplant Association, 2501 COTA Drive, Bloomington, Ind., 47403.

Checks or money orders should be made payable to COTA, with “In honor of Christopher Padua” written on the memo line. Secure credit card donations are also accepted online at www.cota.org.

To participate, e-mail cotaforchristopher@gmail.com to be included on the guest list. To learn more about Christopher and his family, visit www.cotaforchristopher.com.

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