

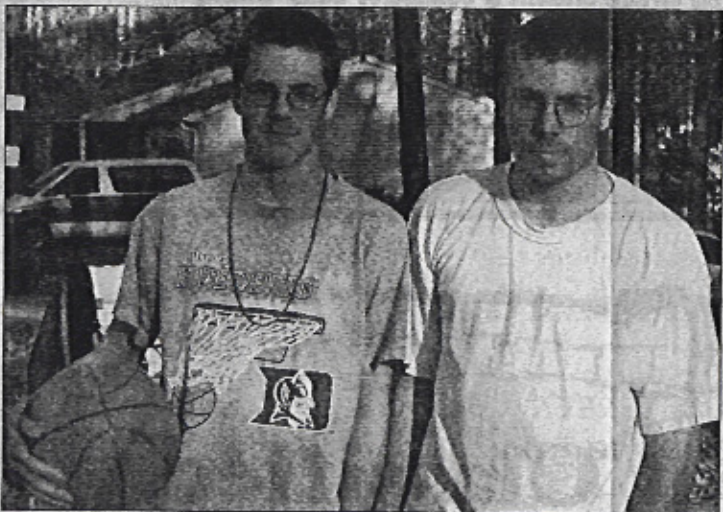
A New idea to find a cure

Family organizes fundraiser to battle Mom's rare disease



Photos by Christie Phillips

Above, Pamela New watches her sons practice shooting free-throws with her daughter, Laura. Below, Adam and William New hope to raise a "lot of money" for research that may help their mother's debilitating condition.



By Christie Phillips

This time of year, most kids are thinking about what they found for themselves under the Christmas tree.

The New family is thinking outside the gift-wrapped box.

"We were trying to think of a way to help Mom," Laura New said. "The idea came about this summer, but it really got going when I came home for Christmas break."

Laura and her two brothers are coordinating a basketball free throw-a-thon to raise money toward a cure for the disorder that has afflicted their mother since 1997.

"I've been fighting Transverse Myelitis for four years," Pamela New said. "It's had such a big impact on my family. They have just been amazing kids through all of this."

TM, which can be acute or slow developing, is a neurological syndrome caused by inflammation of the spinal cord. Initial symptoms may include back pain, numbness and weakness. Eventual paralysis, sensory loss, and bowel and bladder dysfunction may occur.

"My left side is numb," Pamela New said. "I have no sensation, so I can't tell temperature or pain. The kids have to carry hot liquids for me and other things because I drop things a lot."

Helping out around the house

was not enough for the kids.

"There's limited funding and no cure for her condition, so we thought if we raise money, maybe other will think that's a good idea and attempt to do the same," William New said.

The free throw-a-thon will run for four hours Jan. 2 in Bruton High's gym.

"My brothers, William and Adam, and their friend Ryan will shoot hoops for four hours," Laura said. "I'm the judge to make sure they don't cheat."

"They're collecting pledges, so they'll get the money based on how many free-throws they make. A lot of people have pledged 10 cents a free-throw. We're still working on pledges. We're hoping to ask our neighbors and those people who know my Mom.

"We're sending the money to the national office. It will go to finding a cure for TM."

The boys are excited for the challenge.

"I'm hoping to make at least 50 percent of all the free-throw shots I take," William said.

"I guess I'd say I hope to get about the same," Adam New said. "I don't really know."

Want to help? The free throw-a-thon will be held 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 2 in the Bruton High gymnasium.