

Medical costs add to family obstacles

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Bradley resident Scott Evans has been struggling with diabetes nearly his entire life. Now, at the age of 34, he needs a kidney and pancreas transplant to survive.

Scott has been on dialysis for the past four years and unable to work for the last five. His wife, Stacey, has been the sole supporter of him and their 6-year-old son, Hunter. Stacey also lost her father, former Bradley Police Chief David Greenstreet, to renal failure and hypertension brought on by diabetes in 1996.

Evans' mother, Zella Evans, is donating a kidney to him later this month. And after he recovers, which could take up to four months, he will be placed on the donor list for a pancreas. His doctors hope to get both transplants done by the end of 2008.

"I feel blessed that I can give it to him," Zella said. "The Lord's kept me healthy for a reason."

Evans is one of 100,000 people in the United States -- 4,700 in Illinois -- in need of a transplant. His story is one of several being highlighted in The Daily Journal as part of Organ Donor Month.

The disease has also left Scott blind in his left eye and he now needs a cornea transplant to save his right eye.

The transplants may cost up to \$500,000 and the follow-up care could be as much as \$60,000 a year. The family's insurance will only cover a portion of the expenses. Scott will be on a lifetime of medications to prevent his body from rejecting the new organs. He will likely be taking 40 pills



Photo: Mike Voss

Scott Evans, who is waiting for transplants of both a kidney and a pancreas, sits with his wife Stacey, and their 6-year-old son, Hunter.

[More photos from this shoot](#)

every day of his life.

With medical bills mounting, the family is organizing a fundraiser to help pay for the high costs of the transplants.

Scott and his family turned to the National Foundation for Transplants, a Memphis-based nonprofit organization that helps transplant patients overcome financial obstacles, for help with the fundraiser.

"This is a young family that got started with a lot of obstacles," said Carrie Allen, Evans' foundation fundraising consultant. "It would be nice for the public to see that they need a chance."

Allen has been assisting the family in planning a spaghetti dinner fundraiser. The entire community is invited to attend. All of the money raised will go to Scott's transplant-related expenses.

"This is a chance that Scott has that Stacey's father didn't," Allen said.

After the transplants, Scott is hoping he will feel well enough to finally be able to play with his son.

"The best he gets out of me is when he gets to lay down with me when I go to bed and we watch a movie together," Scott said. "I wish I could do more."

Scott said the support of his family and friends helps him live every day.

"There's some days I feel so bad that I wonder how I make it," he said.

Stacey said it's the support of others that has helped her get through this.

"He's got a lot of friends that I'm glad are there," she said.

Scott spends most days lying in bed and sleeps for about 16 hours daily. The family lives at the home of Stacey's mom, Sue Greenstreet, because they cannot afford to live on their own and someone always needs to be with him.

"Scott has been cheated out of life because he's been sick," Zella said. "It's devastating."

If you go:

What: Spaghetti dinner fundraiser for Scott Evans

When: May 16, 5 to 9 p.m.

Where: Kankakee High School

Cost: \$10 for adults, \$5 for children; Raffle drawings will take place

More information: Call (815) 549-3978 or (815) 933-9166

