

# Fundraiser to help family of ill girl, 3

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From a severe heart condition to cerebral palsy, Emma Unis has battled many illnesses since she was born.

Now her parents fear a rare genetic disease that has plagued her brother is attacking the three-year-old's tiny body as well.

Gary Unis said doctors found white pigmentation marks on Emma's skin about a year ago — a symptom of tuberous sclerosis (TS), which causes benign tumours to grow on various organs.

"They haven't actually found any tumours yet, perhaps because she's too young, but we've been told she has (TS)," he said.

Emma's 12-year-old brother, Sean Carley, was born with TS and suffered seizures, nausea and mood swings for years.

"The tumours on his brain affect his moods so he has to be on special medication to control that," Unis said.

Having two children with special needs in a household of eight is tough, but an outpouring of support from family and friends has been a constant help for Unis and his wife Marie, he said.

On Saturday, the Knights of Columbus is hosting a fundraising pasta dinner and dance for Emma in hopes of

raising enough money to cover the cost of medical supplies she requires on a daily basis. She is fed through a tube surgically inserted in her stomach.

"The money is starting to run out, so that's why we're doing this fundraiser," said Unis, a DaimlerChrysler worker who had been supporting six children on one income until his wife recently returned to part-time work as a registered nurse.

"The biggest problem, first of all, is trying to find proper help for (the kids). That's always an issue," Unis said. "Sometimes the other siblings get jealous because these two are getting the most attention."

Another major

problem for Emma is getting around the family's four-level Windsor home.

"She can't get around the house too well with her walker. She bumps into everything," Unis said. "Our goal is to get into a one-level, open-concept home that she can navigate easily. That's one of our long-term goals."

The fundraising dinner will be held Saturday at 6 p.m. at the Knights of Columbus hall at 1286 Lauzon Rd. Tickets are \$15 and there will be a cash bar as well.

Tickets are available in advance or at the door.

For more information, contact Pat Lauzon at [REDACTED] or Marie Unis at [REDACTED]

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