

Delone Organizes Race to Benefit Mommy's Light

By Tracy Behringer

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When Hillary Delone of Uwchlan was diagnosed with breast cancer two years ago, she had a tremendous network of support to help her through difficult times. She also had three children under the age of 6.

"It was scary, especially when you think about the kids," Delone noted.

But the experience of facing her own mortality and finally winning her battle with the disease stirred something in the young mother. She decided to give back to the community and found just the organization to help with the Mommy's Light Lives On Fund.

Founded in 1997, Mommy's Light brings joy and comfort to children and teens whose mothers are terminally ill or have died by helping them keep alive traditions and simple pleasures they shared with their mothers. Delone organized the first Annual Mommy's Light 5K Run/Walk last year.

On Saturday, April 29, the 2nd Annual Mommy's Light event, sponsored by Kensey Nash, a medical device company in Exton, will take place at the Eagleview Corporate Center in Lionville. In addition to raising awareness about the non-profit organization, the 5K Run/Walk raised \$23,000 year and had more than 200 participants.

"This year we already have more than 300 registered," Delone said.

And, according to Laura Munts, Mommy's Light Lives On executive director, about \$32,000 is pledged for this year's event so far.

"When Hillary first called me with this idea, I told her that maybe she should just take care of herself and make sure she was well," Munts admitted. "But she persisted, and she has this amazing team of women to help her."

Delone, is not a runner but had done similar event planning, noted that the group of about six women who serve on the 5KRun/Walk organizing committee are friends and all are young mothers.

"We just knew this was a good organization and it was worth the effort," Delone said.

Indeed, Mommy's Light Lives On Fund has touched many lives since it began. Munts, who helped to found the organization, said it was the inspiration of her friend, Mary Murphy of Newtown Square.

"Mary had a rare form of cancer," Munts said of her friend. "She was a single mom, and about four months before she died, she came to me with this idea. We actually

sat down at my kitchen table, right in Downingtown, and came up with Mommy's Light."

Munts, who stopped practicing law to care for her own young children, said the group had their first fund raiser right before Murphy died.

"Mary had this vision that captured our hearts, but as it turns out, it is also clinically sound as far as helping children through grief," Munts noted. "Its about giving the kids some control in a situation where they don't have much control at all."

When Mommy's Light hears from a family who has lost the mother, the organization provides direct services for the children. They help their carry on the children's cherished memories of time spent with their mothers, such as baking cookies, back-to-school shopping, or planting a garden. Since the organization began, it has served more than 100 children.

"We have a lot of wonderful volunteers who help keep the traditions alive. In a time when there is so much change in a child's life, at least we can help keep these traditions the same," Munts said. "This is something we all can viscerally understand and it is why Mommy's Light resonates with so many people."

This year, among the 300 pre-registered participants for the 5K Run/Walk are students from Shamona Creek and Uwchlan Hills Elementary Schools in Downingtown. Many of the youngsters will be walking in memory of classmates' mothers.

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