

'Mommy's Light' lives on in traditions

By R. JONATHAN TULEYA
Staff Writer

The work Mommy's Light Lives On is not just beneficial to children. The organization's volunteers say it makes them feel good, too.

"It just fills me up ... it's so rewarding to me," said Lori Grim, who has volunteered with the organization for more than two years.

Mommy's Light helps chil-

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Staff photo by Tom Kelly IV

Lori Grim, left, volunteer of the year for Mommy's Light Lives On, and Hillary DeLone, the founder of Mommy's Light annual race, work at the organization's headquarters in Tredyffrin.

Light

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dren whose mothers have died continue the traditions and customs they shared during her life. By rekindling these treasured memories, the organization believes it can help a child cope with his or her mother's death.

In the past, the group has arranged for children to bake cookies, plant gardens, visit museums and attend sporting events.

Grim came across the organization while surfing the Web. Since then, she has worked primarily with three families, including one from Coatesville whose mother died of cancer.

Grim arranges for the woman's two surviving children to go back-to-school shopping at the mall every year.

"When you start talking about traditions that they did with their mom, they start to light up. It does make a difference for them."

Another volunteer, Hilary Delone, began sharing her time with Mommy's Light after completing her treatment for breast cancer.

"I wanted to help other families that weren't as fortunate as I was," she said.

Delone organized the group's first Mommy's Light 5K Race in April. More than 200 runners participated and raised money for the charity.

Mary Murphy founded Mommy's Light in 1997 while she was dying of a rare form of cancer. The organization is now under the direction of Murphy's friend, Laura Munts, of Downingtown.

"Mary died in my arms and I've been doing this ever since," Munts once told the Daily Local News. "(The organization) is my third child and it's been a privilege to do the work."

This past year, Mommy's Light helped 101 children in Chester County and surrounding areas.

The Give-A-Christmas campaign, which is now in its 18th year, raises money to help Chester County's children, eld-

erly, poor and disadvantaged during the holiday season and then throughout the year. It began on Thanksgiving and ends on Christmas.

The campaign is funded entirely through the generosity of the readers of the Daily Local News and the citizens of Chester County. The donated money goes directly to agencies that apply for funds. Last year, 30 agencies received funding from the campaign to assist their clients. All the money sent to the Local News is distributed; not one penny is kept for administrative costs.

Since Give-A-Christmas began in 1988, more than \$610,000 has been raised and donated. For the 2004 campaign, Daily Local News readers contributed almost \$40,000 to the social service agencies taking part.

Give-A-Christmas donations can be sent to Sharon Maletz, Give-A-Christmas Campaign, The Daily Local News, 250 N. Bradford Ave., West Chester, PA 19382.