HEATHER MAX

IN MEMORY OF SON: Cooper Max had some fun with the fall leaves. At 3 years old, he was diagnosed with a quickly growing and spreading form of childhood cancer. He died about a year ago at 4 years old. His mother Heather in organizing a Momma's Night Out event on April 7 at the Warren's Backyard in Granbury to raise funds to find a treatment for children like Cooper.

Momma organized ladies night out in memory of her son

BY BETHANY KURTZ
HOOD COUNTY NEWS

After her 4-year-old son died of swift-moving cancer, Heather Max is fighting back.

Cooper Max died a little more than a year ago. Now, she is organizing a "Momma's Night Out" event on Friday, April 7, to raise money to fund research for cures and treatments of childhood cancers.

The Momma's Night Out is a fundraising event for Unravel, a non-profit that raises awareness about the lack of funding for pediatric cancer research, according to www.unravelpediatriccancer.org.

The event in Granbury will include dinner, a silent auction, live music and a raffle. The event will be from 6 p.m. - 11 p.m. at Warren's Backyard located at 2901 Hwy. 51.

Tickets should be purchased in advance from www.unravelpediatriccancer.org/mno/dallasft-worth/#tickets. Leftover tickets will be available at the door.

"He was the cutest, most handsome kid ever," Heather said.

She first took Max to the doctor when he couldn't raise his left arm all the way, she said. The doctor noticed he wasn't able to coordinate his eye movements and sent them to the hospital for 12 hours of tests and scans.

The Max family lives in Burleson but has relatives in Granbury.

Doctors found a large tumor in Max's lung and dozens of other smaller tumors. It was six days before they were able to identify the type of cancer as a malignant rhabdoid tumor.

Doctors told her the cancer was probably only two weeks old, Heather said.

"It was horrible. The treatments were 20 years old," she said.

Childhood cancers affect children under 16. There are many types, and some are curable, some not.

However, childhood cancers receive fewer research dollars than adult cancers, Heather said.

At the time of his treatment, 3-year-old Cooper received several adult treatments.

"Adult treatments are a lot harder on children's bodies, but children can take it in their minds," Heather said, explaining that children do not suffer as many mental hardships with the harsh radiations and chemo treatments as adults do. "It burned him, and then he moved on."

Overall, Cooper sat through 37 rounds of radiation and 14 rounds of chemo between February and December, Heather said.

The experience was horrible, she said.

"My husband and I would take turns going into the hallways or the shower to cry. But you can't show him you are scared," Heather said.

The treatments shrank the tumors until all that was left was a small one in his lungs by December, but when he returned for a three-month scan in March, the tumors had returned with vengeance.

Cooper died about two weeks later from fluid in his lungs, caused by the quickly growing tumor, she said.

After Cooper's death, Heather learned about the Momma's Night Out and felt compelled to get involved.

"I felt like I had to do something. I couldn't do enough to be a voice for my son," she said. "It is really up to us as mommas to stand up for our children."

For more information, visit Copper's Facebook page Team Copper Max or email Heather at hlmax0426@gmail.com.

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JEFF MEADOR/GRANBURY ISD

Free throws bring in cash

Project Graduation received a $1,022 donation from Brent Northcutt Farmers Insurance and Financial Services. Northcutt tracks free throws made by Granbury players during Pirate and Lady Pirate home and away games and pledged a dollar amount for every free throw made. He also sponsored several halftime free throw shoot-outs featuring school officials and local celebrities. Project Graduation is a parent organization that sponsors a safe, all-night celebration following high school graduation. In the photo are (left to right) Pirate head coach David Breazeale, Granbury High School Principal Jeremy Ross, Northcutt and Lady Pirate head coach Steve Schmidt.

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