

Rafi's Giraffies

Fundraiser at Amigos will benefit child, others with brain disorders

By ROSE BACA
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It's a disease with which about 100 children in the world are afflicted. And Rafael Romanillos of Richardson is one of those children.

Shanna Romanillos' 4-year-old son was diagnosed with cerebral folate deficiency, a neurological syndrome that hinders physical and cognitive development.

To help Rafael and other children afflicted with brain disease, Romanillos and her team of family and friends, called Rafi's Giraffies, will host a fundraising event on March 12 at Amigos Restaurant in Richardson benefiting The Child Brain Foundation.

The team name is short for Rafael, who is also the team's captain, and the giraffe, which decorates Rafael's room, is the team mascot, she said.

Rafael's symptoms include low muscle tone, inability to move or sit up on his own, seizures and weak eye muscles. Although Rafael is cognitively behind for his age, Romanillos said he is very aware of his surroundings.

In the last six months, Rafael has undergone a vitamin supplement treatment to help his condition, Romanillos said. Within 24 hours of his first treatment, Romanillos said Rafael was able to consistently hold a gaze.

"We don't know what to expect because it's so rare," Romanillos said. "But what we have seen we've been excited about, so we wanted to give back."

In the past, the team has par-



Photo BY SHANNA ROMANILLOS

Four-year-old Rafael Romanillos of Richardson was diagnosed with cerebral folate deficiency.

cure of muscular dystrophy.

"We can celebrate as a team and still give back to this smaller organization," said Romanillos, who hopes to raise about \$5,000 from the event and donations.

Albertina Cisneros, founder of The Child Brain Foundation and wife of Dr. Juan Pascual, who diagnosed Rafael, will also speak at the event on behalf of the foundation, which she started in 2006. Before Cisneros started the foundation, she said she was working long hours at American Express, and was affected by the stories her husband Pascual, a child neurologist, would tell her.

"I needed to do something a little more important," Cisneros said. "And [to know] that I was contributing to something greater than some company's bottom line."

Contact Rose Baca, neighborsgo assistant editor, at rbaca@neighborsgo.com.

MORE INFO

The event starts at 8 p.m. and includes appetizers, drink specials, and music performances starting at 8:30 p.m. by local bands Hampton Bridge, a 'west coast lodge rock' band and Revolution Garden Party, an eclectic music band, which has members from Richardson. Tickets are \$15 and can be purchased at the door. For prepaid tickets or to make a donation online, visit childbrain



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