

MORE than a cause ...

Petite, blonde, blue-eyed GreyStone member Waynette Peek has a mission. And she's going to do all she can to fulfill it. It's almost as if her life depended on it.

But it's not her life on the line. It's her 3-year-old daughter's, Riley.

After four months and \$30,000 of testing, an observant doctor hypothesized that Riley could be one of 4,000 children born with Mitochondrial disease, a disease of which little is known to date. The mitochondria—energy producing bodies inside each cell of the body which convert food into oxygen—do not produce enough energy. “Her defective mitochondria are causing her cells to be in a ‘brown-out’ all the time,” says Waynette. “They’re not able to tell her cells what to do. It affects every child differently. The reason she has it, we don’t know why yet.

“A lot of children who have it don’t make it to age 13—many die before age 3. I don’t want to be in that position to lose my child. So I’m going to do everything in my power to help find a cure, to get the money to research it and find a cure.”

Waynette and her husband, Rodney, are planning a 5K race, heralded as the “Race for Riley, Whatever it Takes” 5K Walk/Run and Tot Trot in Palmetto, Ga., at the Georgia Baptist Children’s Home (a GreyStone member) on April 30 to raise funds for the non-profit United Mitochondrial Disease Foundation, with all proceeds going to the Foundation. More than 30 Atlanta-area families are known to have children with the disease, and more are being discovered all the time.

Since the mitochondria are the “power



Riley Peek’s life hangs in the balance as her family searches for a cure for a mysterious disease.

plants” of the cells, Waynette decided to seek help from local power companies. To date Newnan Utilities, GEMC Federal Credit Union and GreyStone Power are scheduled to be sponsors of the event.

“The day after Riley’s second birthday, my precious little girl was diagnosed with this terrible disease, which causes her to have abnormal brain function, gastrointestinal problems, muscle failure, and delayed development. She copes with her disabilities through the help of multiple specialists and a special needs school,” Waynette says.

“She is now 3 years old and doctors are unable to tell us what her future holds.

“Someday, my husband Rodney and I would love to be able to tell other parents that there is hope for children with this disease. But for now, there is no cure.

“That’s why my husband and I are holding the race to be held at the Georgia Baptist Children’s Home in Palmetto, our hometown. We are seeking sponsorships and donations for this event,” she says.

Another GreyStone family in Paulding County is also fighting the disease. Don and Kristi Cole’s son, Brody, was 3 years old

in December. He receives nutrition through an IV 20 hours a day due to the disease’s effect on his GI tract.

The race will provide opportunity for sponsors to gain local and statewide visibility, participate in a hometown activity, provide support to families in the community, and assist the United Mitochondrial Disease Foundation in researching and funding a cure.

If you or your business would be interested in sponsoring or assisting with the race, contact Waynette Peek at 770-463-0714 or e-mail the family at waynette@raceforriley.org.

Registration for the race will begin at 7:30 a.m. on April 30, with the 5K run/walk beginning at 8:30 a.m. and the one-mile run and Tot Trot to follow. The morning will include many fun activities for families. Applications are available at GreyStone. Runners may pre-register for \$15 until April 15; after that date the charge is \$20.

For more information on the race, or information on how you can help in the race to find a cure for Mitochondrial Disease, contact Waynette Peek at 770-463-0714.



Waynette, Rodney and Riley Peek. (Not pictured is their son, Reese.)