

GIVING BACK

Survivor relishes opportunities to help out

Johanna "Yopi" Pugh Havlik, 38

Residence: 6000 block of Creekview Lane, Fishers.



Occupation: Mother and author.

Volunteer organizations: Works with SPORTS youth organization in Fishers and helps organize annual fundraising events that raised \$13,000 last year; St. Louis de Montfort Catholic Church volunteer; and treasurer of the Parent Teacher Organization at Fishers Elementary School.

Family: Husband, two children. Moved to Fishers in 1998.

Education: Grew up on Indianapolis' Northeastside; attended North Central High School; graduated from Indiana University in 1989 with a degree in finance.

Lots to do: Yopi Havlik hopes to obtain funding so that copies of her book can be placed in cancer treatment centers and other places available to patients' families. - JOE VITTI / The Star

Giving back: Known as Yopi to many friends, she has been a volunteer in organizations involving her children and family at schools and in youth sports programs in which they participate.

She volunteers as a classroom helper and is on a fundraising committee that gathers more than 100 items, such as Colts and

Pacers autographed balls and uniforms, to be sold in a silent auction to raise money for equipment and scholarships for children to play youth sports.

Personal experience: "(Nearly four years ago), at 34, I was diagnosed with breast cancer, and it came as a total shock because there was no history in our family and no warning.

"About two years later, I got a calling to write a book and tell others about the experience. At first it was to be for adults, but then I decided there wasn't much for children to explain cancer to them. So I decided to write something for children that would be informative but not threatening.

"The title is 'Why Is Mommy Sleeping?' It is based on my illness, two surgeries, chemotherapy and radiation treatments. My tests are all clear of cancer cells. I believe I have been cured because I have more to do."

Why she writes: "I'd have to give Lance Armstrong some credit. When he's raising millions of dollars for cancer research, he talks about the 'obligation of the cured.' He says that while some people are cured and feel they can never speak of cancer again, others get a sense of obligation to help other people. For some reason, I felt it could be done with this book."

What's next: She is looking for a \$50,000 grant, a contributor or underwriter to pay for about 10,000 copies of the 26-page children's book so copies can be placed with doctors, cancer treatment centers and other places to be available to patients' families.

An illustrator is working on drawings and artwork for the book. Havlik hopes to publish it late next spring.

If you know a volunteer we should recognize, please contact us at

-- Compiled by Bruce C. Smith