

Jewelry auction to help fight ALS

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Every other weekend, Michael Barron finds himself in his vehicle headed to Alpharetta, Ga. – just north of Atlanta – to see his daughter, who is in her third year of battling Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis – more commonly known as Lou Gehrig’s disease.

“We go down to help her as much as we can, take the burden off of (her husband) and spend time with our grandchild,” he said.

In addition to making the drive to Georgia, Barron has found another way to help his daughter, Kim, 32, – who is now wheelchair-bound and eats out of a feeding tube – right in the comforts of Bowling Green. Barron will hold a silent auction Thursday through Saturday at **Morris Jewelry** Store in Fountain Square, to help raise additional funding in support of the Kimberly Kim Foundation – a nonprofit corporation dedicated to raising funds for the awareness, research and clinical treatment of ALS.

Barron said the three-day auction will be comprised of inventory that has been in the store for more than a year. The items that are being auctioned will be in the store’s showcases; the auction will also be anonymous.

When someone buys a bid card for \$5, they receive a receipt that has a unique number. That unique number is used to place bids, Barron said.

“The starting bids are also less than the merchandise’s actual cost, so there will be some great deals available,” he said.

The idea for the auction came after the store’s assistant manager attended a seminar in Atlanta, and one of the ideas was to have an auction as a way to turn over merchandise that a business has had for a certain amount of time. With hundreds of items for people to bid on, Barron said he is hoping to raise between \$5,000 and \$7,000.

In addition to the money collected from the sale of bid cards, 10 percent of proceeds from the entire auction will go to the foundation.

The foundation is an arm of the ALS Center at Emory University, which is mostly self-funded. The money the ALS Center needs for research expenses, as well as patient care, is primarily derived from various fundraisers, grants, and other private donations.

The ALS Center at Emory is where Kim receives her treatments.

“She’s a real fighter, but it seems like every day she can’t do something as well as the day before,” Barron said. “And it’s something she fights every day.”

Barron said at least 80 percent of ALS cases have no known trigger, “so it’s a mystery how it starts in a person.” The onset of ALS became apparent when Kim was pregnant – she began to lose feeling in her left hand.

“We thought it was a pinched nerve or something,” he said. “And after the birth of her son, Luke, we just hoped it would go away, but the weakness just started getting worse.”

While battling the effects of ALS, Kim is “blossoming in different ways,” Barron said. He said Kim is still actively engaged in Luke’s discipline and education, still gets around and has even written a children’s book.

“The thing with ALS is you don’t lose your ability to think or understand. It just takes away use of limbs,” he said. “She’s taking it day by day with this disease.”

“Two to five years is the expected life span for a person with this disease ... and that’s why the research is so important. All over the world, people are trying to find a cure for this.”

— For more information, call 843-6103. For info on the charity, visit www.kimkimfoundation.org.