

'Running for Bella' to focus awareness on rare disorder

Fundraiser to help pay medical bills of child with terminal brain illness

By Jennifer Jackson
Staff Writer

NORMAN — Isabella Stringer will celebrate her first birthday in a few weeks, but she can't smile or talk and she'll never be able to run and play like other children.

The little girl has Lissencephaly, a rare brain disorder which requires her to take medication daily to keep from having seizures.

Saturday, some members of the community will do what Isabella will never be able to do — run.

"Running for Bella" will be at Norman Regional Healthplex, 3400 W Tecumseh Road. It will include a one-mile fun run/walk at 7:40 a.m. and a 5k run at 8 a.m. Cost is \$20; registration begins at 6 a.m. Proceeds will help pay for Isabella's medical needs. Some of the money will go toward genetic research.

Michelle Stringer said her daughter is the only child in Oklahoma who has the disorder. She will probably not live past the age of 3.

Ninety percent of children who have Lissencephaly die from respiratory problems; the other 10 percent die from seizures, she said.

Stringer said caring for Isabella has



PHOTO PROVIDED BY STRINGER FAMILY

Isabella Stringer of Norman, 11 months old, has a rare terminal brain disease.

To help

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shown her a greater kind of love and taught her life lessons that most people never learn.

"Loving her in the beginning was very difficult and tried our patience," she

hobbies, broccoli and cau-

Disease

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said.

The most difficult part of Isabella's illness is knowing she'll never see her true personality, Stringer said.

"We'll never really know who she would have been or what kind of life she would have had," she said. "We'll never hear her talk or laugh.

"It's important for us to spend as much time with her as possible while she's here," she said.

Stringer hopes the race will raise awareness about genetic birth disorders because they can happen to anybody.

Anyone interested in participating can register at www.runningforbella.org.



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