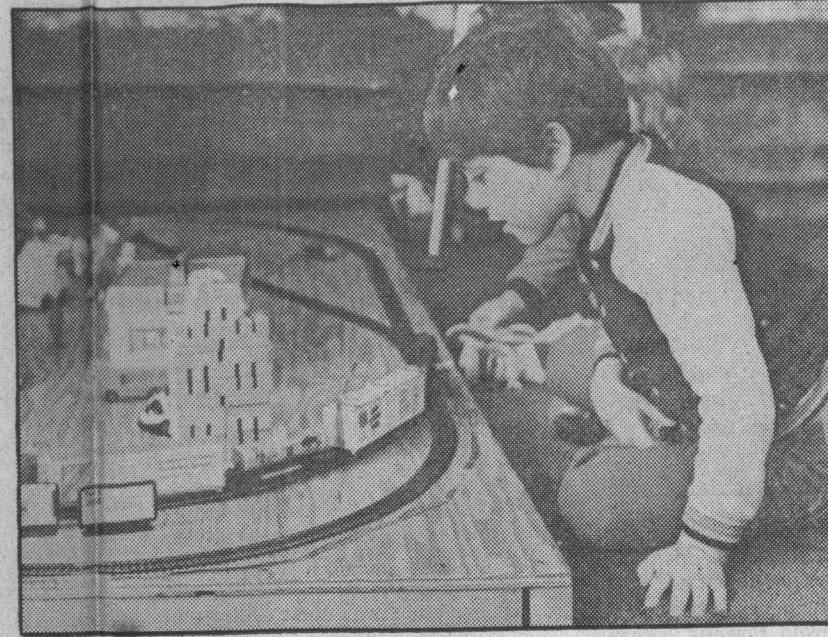


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Pete Amos/Sentinel

Ariel Dolowich, in complete remission after treatment for Hodgkin's Disease, is at right and his parents, Gary and Sena Dolowich, are at left. "Children are so innocent and unsuspecting," Gary says, "it's hard to make sense of it. It's good for the parents (in Circle of Hope) to get together and share."



Each moment with kids is a precious gift

By BARBARA BURKLO
Sentinel Staff Writer

THE MOMENTS WE HAVE WITH OUR CHILDREN are a precious gift — we don't take them for granted any more."

Gary Dolowich of La Selva Beach is describing the family life he and his wife, Sena, and their children, Jordana, 8, and Ariel, 5, share.

Ariel has just successfully undergone a year's treatment for Hodgkin's Disease, or cancer of the lymph glands. And his parents have become active members of Circle of Hope, a local organization for parents who have children with life-threatening diseases.

The group was started three years ago by

diagnosis was devastating, once we got to Stanford and into the treatment protocol, we just did the steps and saw it through."

Gary, who is a physician practicing mainly in acupuncture, adds that his medical background didn't much help him face the difficult experience.

"It's a different situation," he says. "When it is your own kid, you lose your objectivity."

Sena adds, "It was shocking to get the diagnosis — devastating. But it brought us closer. It helped our coping abilities and strengthened our familial relationships. You just tend to pull things together."

The Campbells have a far different problem. Jonathan's spleen is so large it crowds his kidney and other organs and, because it protrudes behind his ribs, it is in an unprotected position

to what she needs.

Since she must use a walker, Sarah can't join the other kids in a lot of their recess play. But Jackie says they do include her as much as they can and her illness is not really an issue with the other kids.

Sherelyn adds that a child sends out silent messages about how he or she wants to be treated by the other kids — and much of the handicapped child's attitude in this comes from how his illness is handled by his parents.

"Children are so innocent and unsuspecting," Gary says, "it's hard to make sense of it. But it's important, when people say, 'Why?', to struggle with the issues and find our own meaning."

One seemingly innocuous childhood disease that strikes terror into the hearts of these parents

Jonathan Campbell, right, runs his electric train as Sarah Tuttle, above right, watches. Jonathan has a rare ailment and his parents, Sherelyn and Willis Campbell, below, are co-founders of Circle of Hope, a group of parents whose children have



Sena, and their children, Jordana, 8, and Ariel, 5, share.

Ariel has just successfully undergone a year's treatment for Hodgkin's Disease, or cancer of the lymph glands. And his parents have become active members of Circle of Hope, a local organization for parents who have children with life-threatening diseases.

The group was started three years ago by Sherelyn and Willis Campbell and Cynthia and Earl Blevins, of Santa Cruz.

Jonathan Campbell, 5, suffers from a rare combination of ailments — a greatly enlarged spleen and a genetic platelet defect. Jordan Blevins, also 5, has undergone surgery for a congenital heart defect at Mayo Clinic.

Another family involved in the group and sharing experiences today are Jackie and Michael Tuttle, whose five-year-old daughter, Sarah, has juvenile rheumatoid arthritis.

The Dolowiches tell their story:

"Ariel was diagnosed as having Hodgkin's Disease a year ago," says Gary Dolowich. "He has finished chemotherapy and is in complete remission.

"The treatments were the most devastating for him and us to deal with. He had the standard treatment — removal of his spleen at Stanford Children's Hospital, radiation and chemotherapy.

"It was hard on our other child. Typically we would come home from Stanford after a treatment and Ariel would be ill and vomiting. Our daughter (Jordana, 8) would be there, upset because her pigtail was out of place. It was hard to summon one's patience for those mundane situations that to her, were major — but she wanted our attention, too.

"Ariel's prognosis is good. And, though the

your own and, you lose your objectivity. Sena adds, "It was shocking to get the diagnosis — devastating. But it brought us closer. It helped our coping abilities and strengthened our familial relationships. You just tend to pull things together."

The Campbells have a far different problem. Jonathan's spleen is so large it crowds his kidney and other organs and, because it protrudes below his rib cage, it is in an unprotected position.

And, although he is not a true hemophiliac, his platelet defect causes him to be a bleeder and he can have nosebleeds that last for an hour or more. Further, he often has spontaneous bruises on his body that appear for no apparent reason.

Doctors at Stanford will probably have to repair his spleen one day, but as long as he can get along, they will postpone it for a while.

"The hardest part is never knowing why," Sherelyn Campbell says. "We always wonder if we did something wrong.

"The spleen is part of the lymph system and an active part of the body's defense. If it is not working well, a child will become ill more often. Jonathan has had weird infections, like thrush.

"How do we cope? Well, we just do. We face stresses daily, but basically, it's just life as usual."

The Tuttle's experience:

"Sarah's illness started with high fevers that came and went and with swelling of her joints that came and went," says Jackie Tuttle. "Finally, it came, and stayed.

"Sarah has physical therapy three times a week and gold shots once a week and has been treated at Stanford.

"And yes, Sarah has pain."

Sarah is in kindergarten at Gault School, where Jackie says the teachers are very sensitive

by the other kids — and much of the handicapped child's attitude in this comes from how his illness is handled by his parents.

"Children are so innocent and unsuspecting," Gary says, "it's hard to make sense of it. But it's important, when people say, 'Why?', to struggle with the issues and find our own meaning."

One seemingly innocuous childhood disease that strikes terror into the hearts of these parents is chicken pox. For children with flawed immune systems, chicken pox has as its dread accompaniment pneumonia and encephalitis.

"A trauma or pneumonia could probably cost any of our children their lives right now," Sherelyn says.

At the monthly Circle of Hope meetings, the parents do more than share comforts and experiences. They also discuss ways of financing their children's treatments.

For the Dolowiches, for instance, the expense for Ariel's year of treatment was between \$60,000 and \$75,000. Their insurance paid 80 percent and the rest was picked up by California Children's Services.

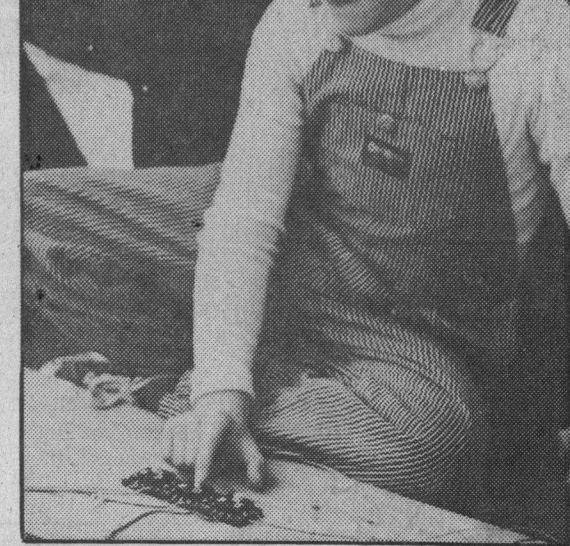
But many people don't know about C.C.S. and the other aids available. And, along with the emotional trauma, the paper work can be staggering.

Something else.

"Even though we're thankful for the traditional, lifesaving care we've received at Stanford and from others," Sherelyn says, "our organization is not shy about encouraging each other to try other things that treat the whole person — like nutrition, chiropractic, acupuncture and spiritual aspects, as well."

For more information on Circle of Hope, call Sherelyn at 425-0781.

Sherelyn and Willis Campbell, below, are co-founders of Circle of Hope, a group of parents whose children have life-threatening illnesses. "How do we cope?" Sherelyn asks, "Well, we just do. We face stresses daily, but basically, it's just life as usual."



"Sarah started with high fevers that came and went and swelling of joints that came and went — finally, they came and stayed," says Sarah's mother, Jackie Tuttle, left. Sarah suffers from juvenile rheumatoid arthritis and her parents are new members of Circle of Hope.