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Record Herald file photo

*Michelle Bender will donate bone marrow to her brother, Stephen who suffers from Hodgkin's disease. The two will leave next month for Nashville, where the procedure will take place.*

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# Community helps man in fight for his life

By **ROSCOE BARNES III**  
*Staff Writer*

**Waynesboro** - Several community leaders hope the public come to the aid of a local man who needs a bone marrow transplant.

Friends and relatives of Stephen G. Bender have set up a trust fund in his name at the Financial Trust. Donations to the fund will be used to assist Bender and his sister, Michelle Bender, who is donating the marrow to the young man.

Checks should be made out to the Glen Furney Assembly of God Stephen G. Bender Fund and sent to any branch of the bank.

A number of fund raising events are planned, according to Barbara Layman, who has joined with Rev. Neville West, Bender's pastor, to spearhead the drive.

"It should be a team effort." Layman said. "Steve has helped many people in Waynesboro."

Bender, 36, has been in remission from Hodgkin's disease. But because of a relapse earlier this year, he needs a second bone marrow transplant.

His sister Michelle, 30, is the perfect match, and she will join the former businessman in Nashville, where the transplant will take place.

A veteran of the U.S Air Force, Bender says many of his financial needs are covered, but there is a concern about his sister, who is the single mother of two children, both students of St. Andrew School.

Bender is expected to be in Nashville for four months for the procedure. His sister will stay two or three months.

During her stay, she will not draw an income from her job at Eckerd's Drug, according to her brother. In addition to needing assistance with caring for her children, the young woman will need money to cover meals, he said.

Steve a single parent with a teen-age daughter, said his parents, Gerry and Lee Bender of 185 Antietam Drive are caring for her in his absence.

After the transplant, his parents plan to go to Nashville to visit him and his sister.

Since he finalized plans to undergo the bone marrow transplant, Bender has received chemotherapy on three occasions.

"They think I am going to do well the transplant, since I'm responding so well to the chemo," Bender said. "presently I'm in clinical remission. From what they can see, the chemo has worked and the cancer is gone."

Bender and his sister will leave for Nashville, Dec. 13.

In the summer of 1997, during his earl bouts with the disease, Bender remained active, working to record Bicentennial events for the Internet.

"Steve was a walking volunteer," said Allie Kohler, Secretary and coordinator for the Bicentennial celebration.

Kohlor said Bender was a great asset in terms of getting the activities on the computer. He took digital pictures and downloaded them on the Internet.

"He's an incredibly nice fellow," said Bender's pastor, "He's always been eager to help other people."

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Note: Donations in support of Bender and his family may be made through the Glen Furney Assembly of God Stephen G. Bender Fund at any branch of Financial Trust. For more information. Call 765-9180 or 762-2479. Information also maybe obtained by visiting Bender's web address at <http://www.webbender.net/webbmt>