Written by Emily Joyner
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Monica Cawthon, 42, needs a lifesaving kidney transplant. Sadly, the costs associated with her transplant are overwhelming, and volunteers are hoping local golfers can help them raise funds to help. In 2010, doctors discovered Cawthon's kidneys were losing function; she was eventually diagnosed with kidney failure, which also afflicted her grandmother. Doctors say a kidney transplant is critical to her survival, and she was recently added to the transplant waiting list. While awaiting her lifesaving transplant, she endures regular dialysis treatments, which take a toll on her quality of life.

A kidney transplant costs approximately $250,000. Even with health coverage, she faces significant expenses related to her transplant. For the rest of her life, Cawthon will need follow-up care and daily anti-rejection medications, which can be very costly.

To help offset these expenses, Cawthon turned to the National Foundation for Transplants (NFT) for assistance. NFT is a nonprofit organization that helps patients raise funds to pay for transplant-related expenses.

"At NFT we understand how scary it is to not only face a life-threatening illness, but also to try and make sense of the enormous expenses," said Lauren Wilmer, NFT fundraising consultant. "We're hopeful this event will be very successful and allow Monica to focus more on her health without worrying so much about the costs."

Volunteers are planning a golf tournament Wednesday, July 25 at 1:30 p.m. Lenoir Golf Club, 701 Norwood St. The 4-person teams cost $50 per player. Lunch will be served at noon before the tournament begins. Prizes will be given to the top four teams, and players may register in advance or the day of the event. Local businesses can participate as a sponsor for $50, which includes signage.

For questions or more information, please contact Barbara Schmidt at bjtex1949@yahoo.com or 828-729-2824.

To make a tax-deductible gift in honor of Cawthon, please send a contribution to the NFT North Carolina Transplant Fund, 5350 Poplar Ave., Suite 430, Memphis, TN 38119. Please be sure to write "in honor of Monica Cawthon" on the memo line. Secure donations also can be made online at www.transplants.org. Donors should click on "Patients We Help" to locate Cawthon.

About NFT

NFT is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization based in Memphis, Tenn. that has been helping transplant patients overcome financial obstacles since 1983. NFT provides fundraising expertise to transplant patients by organizing fundraising campaigns in the patients' own communities. NFT's fundraising campaigns have generated nearly $60 million to assist patients. NFT assists more than 2,500 transplant candidates and recipients nationwide. For more information about NFT, please call 800-489-3863 or visit www.transplants.org.