

Health center fund-raiser has heart

BY KATIE DIMMERY
STAFF WRITER

As Valentine's Day approaches, at least one person is neither questing for dates nor writing sappy poetry.

Christine Cotton, a volunteer for the newly formed North Carolina Children's Heart Center, is planning to cover the windows of Franklin Street stores with hundreds of pink and red hearts to raise funds for the new center.

The fund-raiser, called Hearts on Franklin, allows Chapel Hill residents to make a charitable donation and proclaim their love or friendship to the world. Participants can purchase heart-shaped valentines that will be displayed in the windows of local stores.

Cotton said the idea is for people to buy a heart, personalize it with a message and then tell the intended recipient to check the store window where the valentine is on display.

The fund-raiser coincides with National Heart Month, which begins Saturday and lasts until Feb. 29. Participating stores will sell the hearts at their registers. Pink hearts cost \$1, while larger red ones are \$5. All proceeds will go to the heart center.

More than 50 stores, ranging from Student Stores to University Florist & Gifts, have agreed to take part in the event.

University Florist's prime loca-

tion on Franklin Street leads many groups to solicit donations every week, owner Charles House said, but the heart center is a particularly worthwhile cause.

"I think this one is very important," he said. "It's something we can participate in."

In addition to selling the hearts, House's store also will offer one free rose for every \$5 red heart a customer purchases. "It'll cost them less to buy the heart than to actually buy a rose," he said.

But University Florist isn't the only store offering additional support to the fund-raiser. Design 149, a women's clothing store, plans to sell cap sleeve shirts and tank tops advertising Hearts on Franklin.

Owner Dana McMahan, who designed the shirts specifically for the fund-raiser, describes them as a "wear-everywhere sort of piece." All money made from shirt sales will go to the heart center.

Katie's Pretzels and UNC's pre-health honor fraternity, Alpha Epsilon Delta, have teamed up to promote heart sales. The fraternity will sell the paper hearts in the Pit from Tuesday to Thursday, and the first 500 students to buy \$5 hearts will receive \$1 coupons for Katie's Pretzels.

The overriding goal of the fund-raiser is to get the heart center off to a good start by "helping us gauge what we have funds to do and by raising awareness for the center,"

Cotton said.

The center, which offers comprehensive services to North Carolina children with heart disease, assists in diagnosis, treatment and follow-up care. Its center of operations, which is currently under construction, will be a building within the N.C. Children's Hospital.

"It's a concept and a location being developed at the same time," said Dr. William Henry, professor of pediatrics and chief of pediatric cardiology, who came up with the idea for the heart center.

Many patients' families lack funds even to come to the heart center, so Hearts on Franklin will help to defray their traveling




expenses, including gas, food and hotel accommodations. It also will buy educational materials to explain confusing medical procedures to patients and families.

Cotton said she has high hopes for the heart center and plans to expand the Hearts on Franklin fund-raiser to a Hearts in Chapel Hill fund-raiser next year. She is already planning a statewide charity fun-run for September.

Any businesses or individuals interested in helping out should call Cotton at the N.C. Children's Hospital Pediatric Cardiology Clinic at 919-966-4601.

Contact the Features Editor
at features@unc.edu.

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Visit Franklin Street merchants and make a donation in support of the first annual *Hearts on Franklin* fundraiser for the North Carolina Children's Heart Center.

For information, please contact Christine M. Cotton at 919-966-4601 ♥ Supported by AEA

