



**ANDIE BRYMER / HERALD**  
Shelby Police Chief Charlie Vanhoy talks about cancer with Kings Mountain Middle School students

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# KMMS students hear chief's cancer story

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER  
Staff Writer

Kings Mountain Middle School eighth graders learning about cancer got a firsthand story Friday morning.

Shelby Police Chief Charlie Vanhoy told the students about having MDS, a rare cancer that attacks the bone marrow.

Vanhoy attributed his only symptom, excessive bleeding if cut, to the blood thinning properties of the aspirin he took daily to prevent heart disease. Bloodwork during a routine physical two years ago revealed the disease.

"Your world stops. You don't believe it," Vanhoy said of being diagnosed.

Doctors gave the middle aged man two to six months to live. They told him to stop working and to stay away from crowds. They feared the chance of being exposed to germs would increase if Vanhoy were around groups. Cancer has suppressed his immune system.

Vanhoy refused to take the medical community's advice. Instead, he stayed on as police chief, continues

to work on the family farm and routinely interacts with crowds.

"I just decided I wasn't going to let it bother me," he said.

While Vanhoy hasn't allowed his diagnosis to stop him from living, it has changed his priorities.

"It's not money or what others think but family and friends, how you treat others around you," he said.

When Vanhoy lived past the six month mark he was both happy and confused. His outliving the prognosis now by four times is not unusual for syndrome patients.

The word syndrome instead of disease is used when there is little known about a condition, Vanhoy said. Doctors are not required to report statistics on syndrome patients to the Centers for Disease Control but are required to do so for patients with a disease.

While the lack of research makes finding a cure difficult, the problem is compounded because so few people have MDS. Drug companies put few resources into finding medications for rare conditions because

potential profits are slim.

One possible cure would be a bone marrow transplant. There currently are no matches for Vanhoy in the bone marrow registry however a local campaign is underway to recruit donors. Individuals between the ages of 18 and 60 are eligible to be placed on the registry.

The American Red Cross is collecting blood samples Saturday at the Cleveland County Fair. This is the first step in becoming a donor.

"Please beg them, push them to come out Saturday," Vanhoy told the eighth graders. "If you get your folks to come out you could possibly save a life."

Currently, only one percent of the possible donor base is registered.

Eighth graders are researching cancer and raising funds for cancer research. They will travel to Washington, D.C. later this year to lobby Congress to allocate more money for research.

Vanhoy's visit was part of student Tiffany Herndon's class project. Her mother Stephanie Herndon works at the Shelby Police Department.

# Ethel Pedersen KM Principal of the Year

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER  
Staff Writer

Ethel Bumgardner Pedersen has been named Wachovia Principal of the Year for the Kings Mountain Intermediate School.

With 30 years in education, Pedersen faced her biggest career challenge two



Pedersen has an undergraduate degree from Gardner Webb University and a masters degree and certificate of advanced study from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

Pedersen lives in Polkville with her husband C.J. "Pete" Pedersen. She has one son, Dennis Bumgardner, three step-children, eight grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

The Wachovia Principal of the Year award is co-sponsored by the state Department of Public Instruction. Pedersen now moves on to southwest regional competition. After the state selection process is completed, one principal will be selected as 2004 Wachovia Principal of the Year.

This is the 24th year Wachovia Corporation has sponsored the financial awards. Local principals receive \$200. The regional winners get \$1,500 for their school and \$1,500 for personal use. The state winner receives \$3,000 for the school and \$3,000 for personal use.

Regional award recipients will be selected by February. Principal of the year will be selected May 6.

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