

Henry GOP women to host fund-raiser

Effort will help member with medical bills

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[Saturday, July 18, 2009](#)

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By Valerie Baldowski

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The Republican Women of Henry County is raising money to offset the medical bills of one of its own.

The group is planning a July 25 fund-raiser at the Henry County Moose Lodge to raise money to help defray medical costs for Sahar Hekmati, vice president of the group.

Hekmati, 33, was diagnosed with a brain tumor in 2007, she said, and traveled to California for surgery to have it removed. Soon after, she suffered a small stroke and now needs regular magnetic resonance images (MRIs).

A second surgery will eventually be needed, said Hekmati, who is from Afghanistan.

"I've already had one, and I'm going to have another," she said. "The first time they had the surgery, they didn't get it all out."

Her medical insurance did not pay the entire cost of the first surgery, she said, and she still owes \$34,000. She will also need \$15,000 toward the next surgery, she said.

Those attending the fund-raising event will pay \$25 per person. Hekmati said she is hoping to have about 200 people on hand.

The fund-raiser will begin at 7 p.m., and will be held at the Moose Lodge No. 2170, in McDonough. Donations will be accepted, a silent auction will be held, and the event will include a wine-and-cheese party. Music will be provided by Joey Brush and his band, Capital Offense. Hekmati said the group's music includes country and jazz styles.

"They're pretty popular, [and] they're hard to get," she said. "They're coming here from Augusta and doing this for free."

Eleanor Smith, the group's treasurer, joined the Republican Women of Henry County in the past year and was immediately told of Hekmati's medical condition. She said Hekmati has refused to let her health slow her down.

"She goes like wildfire," said Smith. "I think it's to keep her mind off this. Everyone knows her. She's an asset to our group."

The fundraiser is non-partisan, and all are welcome to attend, she said.

Hekmati said Republican state officials have been invited to the event, along with leaders of GOP-women groups from around the South.