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Cancer fighter builds a winning foundation Making a difference in KC: Cancer fighter builds a winning foundation MA KING A DIFFERENCE

By ANN SPIVAK



Mike Mazlowski (from left) joins Kevin Franke and David Emerson at a recent poker fundraiser.

David Emerson, 44, has spent the last two years fighting advanced prostate cancer.

Along the way, he has found strength and hope by forming a foundation to help others.

"I wanted to help other people and to make them aware that this could happen to them," Emerson said. "And I wanted to give something back as I fought my own personal battle.

"Men are pretty guarded about health issues," he said. "For me, I had the insurance. It was just making the appointment with the doctor that I and so many men just put off."

Emerson, along with his wife, **Mary**, formed a nonprofit organization called the Faith, Love, Hope, Win Foundation. The name is based on Emerson's philosophy about cancer: Winning the battle requires faith, love and hope. Then he persuaded four friends — **Steve Franke, Mark Pyle, Chris Arth** and his brother-in-law, **Rich Lodes** — to form the board of directors.

Emerson also began making inspirational diary entries on the foundation's Web site, www.flhw.org. One entry he wrote last month said, "I wouldn't change anything I have been through in the last two years. I have learned so much, grown so much, and met so many new wonderful people. I would, however, trade the whole ordeal for a cure or at least assurance of 20 or 30 more years."

During the last year and a half, the foundation has held golf tournaments and poker games and even sold royal blue wristbands that say, "Faith, Love, Hope, Win."

Together those efforts have raised more than \$45,000 for research and awareness, the two missions of the foundation.

"Prostate cancer is easily detectable with a blood test," Emerson said. "People just don't have it done. And so much can be done today ... it's like what breast cancer was 10 to 15 years ago."

Emerson, who lives in south Overland Park with his wife and 10-year-old son, Brad, has been spreading the word about the foundation to anyone who will listen, appearing on area radio and television stations and writing articles for magazines.

His goal this year is to raise about \$20,000 to have the National Prostate Cancer Coalition in Nashville, Tenn., bring two large trailer trucks to the Kansas City area to offer free prostate cancer screenings, one for the west side and one for the east side of the area.

And he wants to do this for two days.

"They can screen about 400 or 500 guys a day," Emerson said, adding that one in six American men will get prostate cancer. "That comes out to about \$20 a man, which is nothing."

Do you know people in the community who are making a difference? Send suggestions to Ann Spivak, The Kansas City Star, 1729 Grand Blvd., Kansas City, Mo., 64108, or e-mail aspivak@kcstar.com.