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MARINE CORPS VETERAN FINDS SUPPORT FOR WIFE FACING TRANSPLANT **Mobilizing their extended military family for an urgent cause**

ROBERTSDALE, Ala.— In September 2016, Cynthia “Cindy” Bertram learned that her body was fighting hepatitis C, contracted from an unknown cause despite her avoidance of drugs and alcohol. The diagnosis has caused significant damage to her liver, and the resulting cirrhosis will rapidly destroy her health without a liver transplant. Though she has Medicaid, many of her expenses are uncovered, including the post-transplant immunosuppressants she will need to take for the rest of her life.

Despite the immense burdens that she is facing, Cindy has a powerful ally on her side: her husband, who knows exactly what it means to be “always faithful” and never give up the fight.

Tony Bertram is a Marine Corps veteran, and his fight isn’t over yet: Tony is mobilizing both his local community and his online network of veterans to help secure the gift of life for Cindy. The associated costs are far beyond their family’s capacity to cover alone. “We have been told to anticipate a financial responsibility upwards of \$5,000 per month,” said Tony—*after* insurance.

Tony served in the Marines from May 1975 to January 1985, earning the rank of Sergeant. His son was born in 1977 with disabilities associated with fragile X syndrome. “To me, family has to come first,” he explained. “I chose to leave the Marines to help raise my son. He values keeping in touch with those he served, the “Esprit de Corps” among Marines.

With his own legacy of service to his country, Tony still holds up Cindy’s own contributions to the community and his family: “Cindy’s life has been a shining example of service, compassion, and love for others,” he said. In addition to serving as a proud and supportive military wife, she is “a true caregiver at heart” who not only cared for her own son with disabilities but also fellow Marine Corps families and their children during deployments. She has been a lifeline to members of the community with Alzheimer’s in need of support with their daily needs and transportation.



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To help with the immense financial burden, Cindy started a campaign with the national medical fundraising nonprofit Help Hope Live at helphopelive.org. Tony has found some success by mobilizing his online community of fellow veterans and supporters, [using Twitter](#) and Facebook as platforms to receive financial and emotional support. He and Cindy are asking the community to continue to donate as they face this physical and financial fight head-on.

Anyone interested in helping Cindy can make a contribution “in honor of Cynthia D Bertram” at helphopelive.org or by calling 800.642.8399 or by going on the Web to <https://helphopelive.org/campaign/14019/> and making an online Donation. Donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law, and all funds raised will be used to offset medical expenses via Help Hope Live’s Southeast Transplant Fund.

Help Hope Live is a national nonprofit that specializes in engaging communities in fundraising campaigns for people who need a transplant or are affected by a catastrophic injury or illness. Since 1983, campaigns organized by Help Hope Live have raised over \$135 million to pay patient expenses.

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