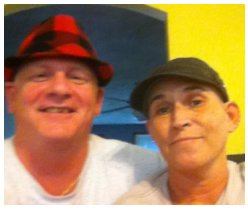

After his wife, Robin Bradish, started chemotherapy for leukemia her husband Mike shaved his head in support. Mike is a Crystal Falls native. A blood drive dedicated to Robin Bradish is scheduled for Dec. 17 at Faith Fellowship Church on U.S. 2 near Crystal Falls.

CRYSTAL FALLS—The U.P. Regional Blood Center is sponsoring a blood drive on Monday, Dec. 17, dedicated to a former Crystal Falls resident who is battling leukemia.

Robin Bradish was diagnosed with the blood disorder in September and is currently undergoing chemotherapy. Her family learned how short national blood supplies are when she needed transfusions in an effort to bring the disease under control.

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Robin's husband, Mike Bradish, is a 1983 graduate of Forest Park High School. The couple lived in Iron County until 1988, when they learned that Robin's father was diagnosed with throat cancer. They then moved to Pennsylvania to be with her family.

When Robin received a cancer diagnosis and needed platelets and blood, family members looked for ways to donate.

"It was a frightening and helpless feeling not to be able to donate blood directly for Robin," sister-in-law Liz Lewis said.

"This led me to start looking into ways that our family and I could become involved and possibly get our blood to her," she said.

"At one point in my research I was told that we could possibly donate in Robin's 'honor,' and by sending the list of donors to her hospital in Pittsburgh, it could defray some of their cost down the line. This information put me in contact with Sallie Coron at the U.P. Regional Blood Bank. I found out from Sallie that donating in another's honor for help with cost deferral was no longer being done here.

"By talking to Sallie, I came to realize that there is a shortage of blood available for donations everywhere, and especially in the U.P," Lewis added. "I then understood that every day, families everywhere experience that same feeling of fear and helplessness that I experienced. I decided to go ahead and work with Sallie at the blood bank and have a blood drive in my sister-in law's honor anyway, with the donations staying in the U.P. and helping all of our families in need here."

Because blood collected during the drive is going to the U.P. Regional Blood Center, it will all stay in the Upper Peninsula, according to Blood Center spokeswoman Sally Coron.

"A lot of people don't realize that all of the blood we get stays here," Coron pointed out. "Of the 15 hospitals in the U.P., we provide the blood for 13." That includes providing blood to NorthStar Health System in Iron River and Dickinson County Memorial Hospital in Iron Mountain.

"We collect all of our blood from volunteers," Coron said. "Our top priority is providing a safe

blood supply."

The Blood Center sets a goal of collecting at least 12,000 pints a year. "Right now, we're a little behind that," Coron said.

The U.P. Regional Blood Center blood drive is Monday, Dec.17 from 2-6 p.m. at Faith Fellowship Bible Church on U.S. 2 in Crystal Falls.

Walk in donations are welcome or an appointment to donate can be made by calling Mary Bradish at (906) 284-1020 or Liz Lewis at (906) 776-1553.