

## Parents of EEE victim raising money for disease research

September 10, 2006

NEWTON, N.H. --A year after their daughter was killed by Eastern equine encephalitis, her parents continue their fight against the illness.

The signs of their commitment are large and small -- from the mosquito trap that now hangs outside their house to efforts to raise money for vaccine research -- Rick and Donna Labell of Newton say they are working to ensure Kelly did not die in vain.

Twenty-year-old Kelly Labell's death Sept. 9, 2005, was the state's first EEE fatality that year. An 80-year-old Hooksett man also died from EEE later that month.

Rick Labell, a police detective in Raymond, believes his daughter didn't have to go far to contract the illness.

"We believe Kelly was killed in our own yard," he said. "As far as our lives go, we have a hole that will never be filled."

Today, the Labells keep their house snugly sealed against mosquitoes. They keep their porch lights off at night and stay inside at dusk, when mosquitoes come out. They enter and leave using one door.

The Labells also are embarking on bigger projects against EEE.

At a benefit Oct. 14 in Bradford, Mass., the Labells hope to kickoff a fundraising campaign to raise money for research for a human vaccine for EEE. A vaccine exists for horses, but not people, a situation the Labells find intolerable.

"That blows my mind," said Rick Labell. "One person dying from it is one person too many."

The family hopes to raise at least \$10,000 at the benefit and plans to send the money to Alphavax Inc., a vaccine development company in North Carolina.

Rick Labell also participates on a state EEE task force. He testified in support of a legislation last year to provide state support to towns and cities that spray for mosquitoes.

So far in 2006, there have been no reported human cases of EEE, though state health officials have advised several towns in southeastern New Hampshire to spray for mosquitoes, due to the high number of mosquito pools testing positive for the disease. As of last week, 15 mosquito pools reported EEE

infections.

-----

Information from: Portsmouth Herald, <http://www.seacoastonline.com> ■

---

© [Copyright](#) 2006 The New York Times Company

■