

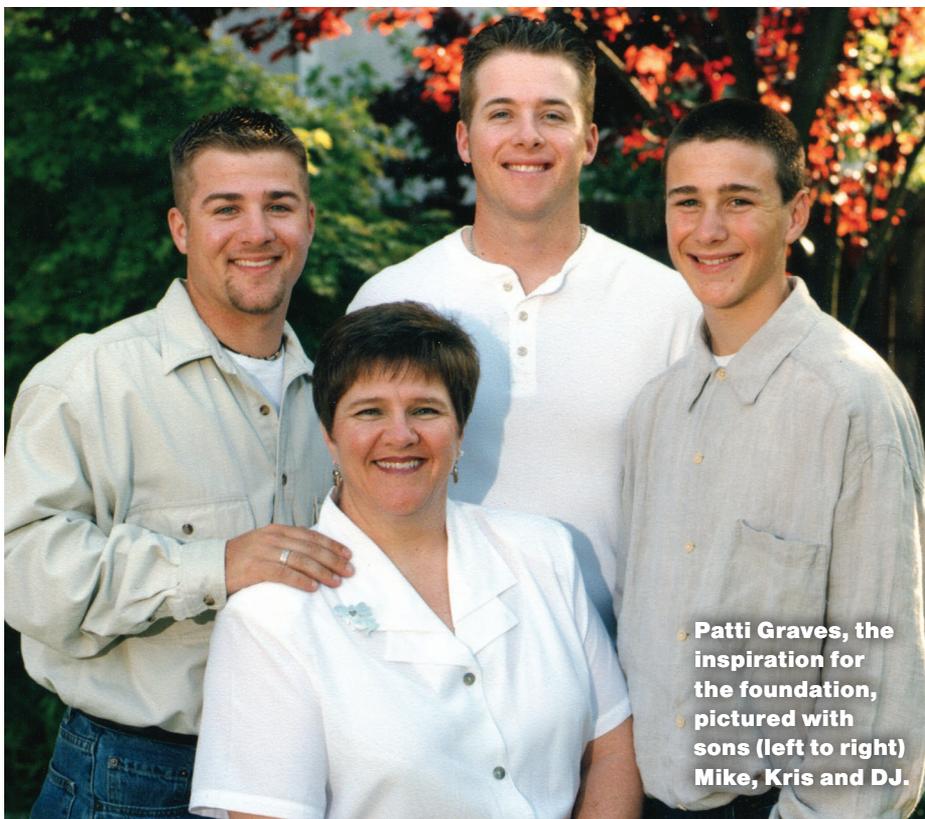
Foundation created to assist families affected by cancer

# How One Santa Rosa Family Makes a Difference

The legacy of a great mother lives on through the actions of her children. Patti Graves was one such mother. She raised three boys as a single mother, was a beloved teacher and sadly passed away too young from uterine cancer in 2005. But her legacy lives on with The Mama Bear Foundation, founded by her family (son Kris, his wife and cousin), created to assist families affected by cancer.

“We set out to help, plain and simple,” says Kris Graves, noting that his mother “was the greatest woman on the planet and the epitome of a Mother Bear. The foundation is for her. It is in her honor and to keep her memory alive. When she was diagnosed, the doctors and specialists had answers and help for her, but it left us (the family) reeling with the news.”

After recovering from that experience, the family decided to do something to help other families in similar situations by creating a foundation to provide whatever assistance is needed. The Santa Rosa foundation has “adopted” its first family—a mother/wife who is currently undergoing painful radiation treatments. They give support to the family by helping to coordinate assistance from The Salvation Army, Catholic Charities and various



**Patti Graves, the inspiration for the foundation, pictured with sons (left to right) Mike, Kris and DJ.**

families offering help. Foundation members, called angels, bring meals, have paid for a month’s rent on the family’s home, purchased them a new mattress and are helping with transportation needs.

“Families want to know ‘What do we do now? Where do we go?’ That is what The Mama Bear Foundation (TMBF) is looking to help with as well. We are there for not only the patient but for the family,” Graves

adds. “I’m a firefighter, so I get to help everyday at work, and I want that to continue when I’m off duty.”

The Foundation is currently looking for new families to support, as well as funding and volunteer help. To find out more about the foundation, go to [themamabearfoundation.org](http://themamabearfoundation.org), the foundation’s active facebook page, or email Kris Graves at [kgraves@themamabearfoundation.org](mailto:kgraves@themamabearfoundation.org). 