

Care kits offer comfort during chemo



Family support: Breast cancer sufferer Nina Field receives some love from children, Josh, 7, and Maya, 5. Picture: DAVE TEASE

By LAUREL-LEE RODERICK

HORSLEY mum Nina Field reckons chemotherapy is not so bad if you compare it to the worst-case scenario after a cancer diagnosis.

But it is not much fun either, especially with two young kids, Maya, 5, and Josh, 7.

At just 35 years old, Mrs Field was given the heartbreaking news that she had breast cancer.

Since being diagnosed in the first week of April, she has endured two rounds of surgery and three gruelling months of chemotherapy.

In four weeks' time, she

will line up for the next round of treatment - six weeks of radiation therapy.

Women like Mrs Field are the focus of Illawarra charity Raise The Gong, which is hosting its second annual Hollywood Gala fundraising ball at the Portofino function centre on Saturday.

The goal is to raise money to put together Chemo Care Kits, to be distributed to around 20 new female cancer patients at two Illawarra cancer clinics each week.

The kits would contain creature comforts to help women cope during chemo, Raise The Gong board

member Amy Porritt said.

They include a scarf or beanie, chemical-free soaps, wheat packs for sore muscles, lollipops to prevent nausea, samples of honey to help with a sore throat, and toothpaste or mouthwash that won't burn sensitive mouths.

Illawarra businesses are also sponsoring voucher booklets for haircuts, manicures, bra fittings and other services.

"People can feel like a number when going through chemo, but this is more personalised," Ms Porritt said.

Mrs Field, who worked as the regional fundraising

manager for the Leukaemia Foundation until she got sick, said she had the benefit of some knowledge about what to expect during chemotherapy.

She was also lucky enough to have income protection insurance.

For others without her background, she said the kit would be a huge asset.

"It is an anxious time, but this bag will give you all the little bits you wouldn't know about," she said.

"Chemo becomes such a big part of your life, you need that support."

Tickets to the Hollywood Gala are available at www.raisethegong.org.au.