

CELEBRATIONS

Weston author hopes to help cure cystic fibrosis

Genetic disease afflicts daughter

BY JULIE LEVIN
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Leah Orr is confident the best story is still to unfold before her.

The Weston author recently penned a book to help her youngest daughter, **Ashley**, who suffers from cystic fibrosis.

"It is just a passion that drives me. I had to find a way to make more money to find a cure for CF," she said.

The first-time author took just three days to turn out *Kyle's First Crush*, a 24-page story of a little boy's crush on

a beautiful classmate who is afflicted with cystic fibrosis. Kyle learns through his teacher how this illness affects the girl he loves.

The book, the first in a planned series of seven, will help raise money for research and development into new treatments for the disease.

According to Orr, scientists believe a cure for CF is possible by 2012.

"I will write a book every year until a cure is found," said Orr.

The book was inspired by Orr's daughter Ashley, who was born with the life-threatening, genetic disease that affects about 30,000 Americans.

An ultrasound and other tests determined the problem before she was born, so she has been on medicine

since day one.

"She is 3 years old and hasn't even had the common cold," Orr said.

Still, there are daily reminders of the illness. Ashley is on five medicines a day and she must take an enzyme each time she eats.

The family has raised money each year to fight CF through walk-a-thons, but it wasn't enough.

"I wanted to do more," said Orr, who has two other daughters, **Alyssa**, 8, and **Camryn Lee**, 6.

The book is illustrated by Ashley's grandmother, **Josephine Lepore**. The drawings are in pencil, but they plan on illustrating with a different medium with each new book.

The upcoming books will follow the

young couple. The next one will be *Playdates with Ashley Elizabeth*.

Orr self-published her book through AuthorHouse and has sold more than 400 copies since October.

The book sells for \$15, with \$6.33 from every book going to the CF Foundation. The remaining proceeds help pay for the publishing.

Check their Web site at www.kyles-firstcrush.com or call 954-385-9553.

FIGHTING THE BATTLE: Leah Orr and daughter Ashley Elizabeth combat Ashley's illness together. As one of her weapons, Leah Orr is using the pen to write books that address the disease.

Photo courtesy of Leah Orr

