Karmanos art program helps the young children of cancer patients.

**Elizabeth A. Katz**
Special to the Jewish News

Karmanos art therapist Wendy Levine helps Benjamin Harvey, 10, sort out his feelings about his mother’s cancer.

Karmanos’ Friends Like Me program combines art therapy and counseling for kids age 5 and up.

**Mom’s Perspective**

Mom Amy Harvey says Benjamin benefits from the art therapy classes and has become more accustomed to her diagnosis and treatment regimen, considering that she has had a chronic cancer for six years and is currently in treatment.

“My husband, Peter, and I are always upfront with him about my cancer,” Amy said. “He’s done better with it than the last time. He comes in every other week to see Wendy. I think the art therapy helps him.”

Amy, who is being treated by Robert Morris, M.D., Gynecologic Oncology Multidisciplinary Team leader at Karmanos, said that for now, there are no new cancer tumors. She tries not to look at survival statistics and says that her family and maintaining a good sense of humor helps her to live with a chronic disease. She also finds help at Karmanos’ monthly support group for young women with cancer or a history of cancer.

“My mom, who has beat breast cancer three times, told me you have five minutes a day to feel sorry for yourself and then you move on,” she said. “Humor really helps me put things in perspective. I’ve been dealt a tough hand, but I’ve survived for six years. It is what it is. I’m here to talk about it.”

“Peter is my rock and Benjamin is my pebble. He always asks, ‘Can I help?’”

Said Benjamin, “Though Mom has chemotherapy, she can do a lot of great stuff, like playing outside, playing board games and throwing around a ball.”

Amy also mentioned that those who work at the Weisberg Cancer Treatment Center help her as well.

“When you’re dealing with cancer, it’s scary walking in here,” she said. “Everybody is so nice and so friendly.”

For more information about the Friends Like Me program or to make a donation to the Shelley Littman Endowment Fund for Children, which supports Friends Like Me, information about Karmanos Cancer Institute, contact 1-800-KARMANOS (1-800-527-6266) or visit karmanos.org.

Donations also are accepted at www.karmanos.org/ShelleyLittman. For more information about Karmanos Cancer Institute, contact 1-800-KARMANOS (1-800-527-6266) or visit karmanos.org.

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