

Imagine Me Foundation honors cancer patients

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DAILY REPUBLIC

TRAVIS AIR FORCE BASE — Encouraging and uplifting current and former cancer patients and their loved ones was the goal, Saturday night, as the Imagine Me Foundation celebrated its annual awards ceremony at the Delta Breeze Club at Travis Air Force Base.

Close to 250 people gathered for an evening of music and celebration of life, and to honor those who are fighting the disease, have survived it and those who have lost loved ones.

"We're here to honor cancer survivors, those who have lost loved ones," said Melissa Sampson, founder of the Imagine Me Foundation, which helps support cancer patients and their families by providing meals, cleaning and other resources.

"We really (try to) touch the heart to be there on a personal level," Sampson said. "Be a help



From left, CMSgt. Mike Yoakum helps TSgt. David Lopez with his corsage at the Imagine Me Foundation award ceremony, Saturday.

Jane Higgins/Daily Republic

in their life right now, that's what's important right now."

The foundation covers mainly Solano County, but is expanding

to other cities nationwide, including Oklahoma City and Washington.

Sampson said the honorees

receive trophies and other awards, honoring their fight against cancer, and also honoring the families of those who have lost their battles.

One of those being honored Saturday was Air Force TSgt. David Lopez of the 60th Security Forces Squadron.

"It's unique to me. I've never been honored for really anything in my life," Lopez said. "The circumstances suck, but I'm a pretty positive guy, so it seems like a very positive event for a lot of folks."

Lopez, 34, was diagnosed with Stage 3B colon cancer in June.

"I went into the hospital for abdominal pain," he said.

A colonoscopy and a biopsy later and he knew what he was dealing with.

"I'm just trying to remain positive with what I'm going through and realizing that there's other folks that are less fortunate and going through battles the same as

mine or even more difficult than mine," Lopez said, adding that he'll reach the halfway mark of his chemotherapy treatments on Tuesday.

Being in the military has been a boon for Lopez.

"I'm very grateful for still being in the service," he said. "They're taking care of me. I'm on convalescent leave, they're giving me the time off between treatments to recover."

Still, it's a tough battle with two boys ages 8 and 10 and another one on the way.

Being around the Imagine Me Foundation and the survivors present helps him to keep looking forward.

"It lets me know that there's an end and to remain positive," he said.

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