

Cancer patient has new chance at life

Rejoins class for start of school

By **S. ROY GRAHAM**
Record Staff Writer

CRESSKILL — Kimberly Anne Carbone, the 12-year-old who captured the community's heart with her spirited battle against cancer, has gotten a new lease on life. She's looking forward to living it.

After an eight-month hiatus from school and 2½ months of excruciating pain following a bone-marrow transplant in Omaha, Neb., Kimberly is eagerly awaiting her first day of classes. She begins seventh grade at the junior-senior high school on Wednesday.

"I don't like school much. But

anything's better than Omaha, and I missed my friends," Kimberly said. "This summer wasn't fun."

Kimberly has a rare form of Hodgkin's disease, a cancer that is 90 percent curable with chemotherapy and radiation treatment. In her case, therapy wasn't successful, the cancer invaded her bone marrow, and she needed to have the transplant.

Since she returned from Omaha in June, Kimberly had been susceptible to infections until recently, and wasn't allowed to have contact with other children, said Maureen Carbone, her mother and a longtime borough resident.

"She hasn't been able to do all the things kids do," Maureen Carbone said. "She can't swim, she can't go bowling, and for a while she couldn't go to the theater."

Her mother said there would still be restrictions on Kimberly when she returns to school.

"Gym's out, and once or twice a week she'll have to go to the hospital for a transfusion," she said. "Kimberly has gotten a new life; she's like a newborn baby, with a brand-new immune system."

Kimberly needs the transfusions because the transplanted bone marrow she received is producing blood cells at about 10 percent the normal rate. She also

needs two hours of intravenous medication daily to help her bone marrow grow.

"Doctors won't know for another two years whether Kimberly's cancer is in remission," Maureen Carbone said. "All they can say right now is they don't see any traces of Hodgkin's, and that's good news."

Maureen Carbone said Kimberly's treatment in Omaha started with one week of chemotherapy in April to destroy her bone marrow. Then after she received new marrow, Kimberly spent 2½ months in an isolation ward.

"It was boring," Kimberly said. "There wasn't really much to do."

Kimberly said the pain wasn't as unbearable as some of the therapy she's undergone since her cancer was diagnosed in May 1990. But her mother disagrees.

"Kids tend to forget the pain easily when it's over," she said. "She went through hell in Omaha. She was on morphine for 10 days to kill the pain."

Maureen Carbone said their spirits were uplifted by the communitywide fund-raising efforts for the Kim Carbone Fund set up by the Tomorrow's Children's Fund of Hackensack Medical Center.

"There were fund-raisers almost every week, and we would get news