

PARADE

BY JAMES BRADY

In Step With

CINDY CRAWFORD

The Cindy Crawford we don't see on magazine covers is trying to help cancer caregivers. Why? She lost her 3-year-old brother to leukemia.

Brady's Bits



Model/mom/cancer advocate Cindy Crawford also has a book or two on her résumé. Last year, she released a gorgeously illustrated picture book of herself and her young son and a platoon of other cute-as-can-be kids. Titled *About Face* and shot by top kids photographer Jade Albert, it came out just after the Sept. 11 attacks and pretty much tanked. "A lot of books did at that time," said Crawford. "How could you get on *Good Morning America* and talk about a book of children's pictures at a time like that? But I did the book because I wanted to have some great photos of my son with me." She's done other books that sold well, including *Cindy Crawford's Basic Face*, and a couple of hot-selling fitness videos. As for her new role aiding cancer caregivers, she said, "These days, who doesn't know someone with cancer? When I'm in the supermarket or at the gym, people come up and ask, 'What was that 800 number you mentioned?'" For the record, it's 1-888-422-7380.

THIS COULD BE A Cindy Crawford we don't really know.

The gorgeous supermodel—now the mother of two and still so photogenic she recently was featured in *Vogue* magazine—has thrown her name recognition and energy behind "Strength for Caring." It's a national education and support program for cancer caregivers, and Crawford is the spokesperson.

Nothing new about a celebrity taking on a worthy cause, but in this instance, Crawford's dedication derives from firsthand, personal experience with cancer and the costs and burdens of caregiving: When she was growing up in DeKalb, Ill., her 3-year-old brother, Jeff, died of leukemia.

"My mom was the caregiver," Crawford told me. "She wanted him to have the best treatment, and she drove him two hours each way to a hospital in Madison, Wis. I'll always remember that. My family was not fortunate enough to have a program such as Strength for Caring. We faced the challenge alone."

A leading biotech firm, Ortho Biotech Products, a division of Johnson & Johnson, has been supporting the effort since 1998, basing it on an earlier program developed at the University of Pennsylvania. Strength for Caring is free and held at locations across the country.

Personal:

Born Feb. 20, 1966, in DeKalb, Ill. Married to Richard Gere, 1991-95. Married to Rande Gerber since 1998; one son, Presley, 3, and one daughter, Kaya, 1.

Television:

Includes *Days of Our Lives*, 1978; *House of Style*, 1989-95; *Muppets Tonight!*, 1996; *Elmoopalooza!*, 1998; *Sex With Cindy Crawford*, 1998.

Films:

Includes *The Secret of My Success*, 1987; *Unzipped*, 1995; *Fair Game*, 1995; *Beautopia*, 1998; *S-4*, 1998; *The Simian Line*, 2000; *We Married Margo*, 2000.

Books:

Includes *Cindy Crawford's Basic Face: A Makeup Workbook*, 1997; *About Face*, 2001.



"Are they solid folks?" I asked. "They're good people," said Crawford. "I am comfortable in promoting the program, because I'm familiar with their therapy."

In addition to this work and her very successful modeling career, Crawford's done a lot of television, guest-hosting on *Live with Regis*, as a correspondent for *Good Morning America* and six years hosting MTV's *House of Style*. She's also done a little acting, including the film *Fair Game*, with Billy Baldwin. "It was great to work with and get to know Billy," said Crawford. "I had fun. I only wish it had made more money. My goal never was to be an actress. In fact, it wasn't to be a model, either." But she went on to become one of the most successful covergirls ever.

"You seem to have figured out life pretty well," I remarked.

"You give me too much credit," replied Crawford. "I think it's more that I stumbled in the right direction. I take chances." ■

For more on Cindy Crawford, visit www.parade.com and click on "In Step With."

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