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21-Year-Old Man Needs Community Support Be the One to Save a Life Register to be a Marrow/Stem Cell Donor

Alameda, CA – Kyle Lu, 21, was diagnosed with acute myelogenous leukemia (AML) in November 2011. He is in urgent need of a marrow transplant. This procedure is Kyle’s only hope for his long-term survival. A marrow/stem cell matching donor must be located before any transplant takes place. Kyle is half Filipino and half Chinese. He lives in Fairfield, CA.

It’s difficult to watch a loved one with a long-term illness linger, when, with more resources, their pain might be eliminated and they might have a new lease on life. Those who are not Caucasians are more likely to die of leukemia or of other blood cancers. This is because there is a shortage of ethnic donors on the national Registry.

What’s the Solution?

Encouraging more people of Filipino and or non-Caucasian heritage to join the Registry and potentially save a life. Each of us can “Be The One to Save a Life!” For Kyle, as no family members are a match, it is likely that someone of Filipino or Asian heritage will be a marrow/stem cell match for him. The Asian American Donor Program (AADP, www.aadp.org) is a 22-year-old nonprofit organization, based in Alameda, CA, that works to educate community members about the shortage of ethnic marrow/stem cell donors and the importance of joining the registry. It is the oldest nonprofit of its kind in the country.

AML is a disease of the bone marrow that is characterized by the rapid growth of abnormal white blood cells that interfere with the production of normal blood cells. These abnormal cells crowd out the normal red blood cells, white blood cells and platelets the body needs.

“People need to be open to learning more about joining the marrow registry,” says Jocelyn Tan-Gonzales, Kyle’s mother. “Anyone can join the marrow registry and save a life. We (our family) are not just shooting for Kyle. We are shooting for everyone with Leukemia who needs a marrow match.”

Kyle encourages Filipinos, Chinese and all Asian Americans to become better informed.

“It is important to register as a marrow donor,” Kyle says. “Learn more before hesitating to register.”

According to Carol Gillespie, the AADP executive director, there is a shortage of non-Caucasians on the Be The Match® national registry. “We need everyone of Filipino, Asian, multi-ethnic and ethnic minority ancestry to step forward and join the marrow registry,” Gillespie says. “When a marrow match is not readily available, patients have to wait longer than is ideal to find a match.” When a patient must wait, their body becomes weak and may reject a transplant, once a marrow match is found.

How You Can Help

- Go to these upcoming drives and do a cheek swab to join the “Be the Match” national registry

Saturday, August 18, 2012 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Fairfield Tomato Festival
Texas St./Madison St./Jackson St.
Fairfield, CA 94533

Sunday, Aug. 19, 2012 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Seafood City Health Fair
3495 Sonoma Boulevard, Vallejo CA 94590

- Find out about other drives that you can attend or have a home kit mailed to you.
Go to <http://www.aadp.org/>
- Contact friends and family and encourage them to go to a registration drive or register using a home kit.
- Set up a drive in your area by calling AADP at 1-800-593-6667
- Volunteer to help at registration drives or in the AADP office.

More about Kyle Lu

Kyle Lu attended Solano Community College with the intention of majoring in Computer Information Science. His dream was to one day work at Pixar Animation Studios. Kyle is passionate about gourmet food. He sees himself as Remy, the main character in the 2007 computer-animated film *Ratatouille*. Last summer, he even signed up to take a cooking course, hoping one day he will have the ability to become a professional chef.

Kyle is part Chinese and part Filipino, making his search for a match much more challenging. Kyle turned 21 before he was diagnosed with acute myelogenous leukemia.

Shortage of Ethnic/Multi-Ethnic Donors—What’s the solution?

The Be The Match® registry recruits hundreds of thousands of donors each year through an extensive network of more than 100 local and regional recruitment organizations. All of these organizations recruit for the national Be The Match® registry and each person only needs to join once.

A marrow/stem cell transplant may be the only chance for patients with leukemia or other blood cancers to survive. Those who are not Caucasians are more likely to die of these illnesses. This is because there is a shortage of multi-ethnic donors on the Be The Match Registry, operated by the National Marrow Donor Program® (NMDP). Only 30% of the time can a searching patient find a match from one of his or her siblings.

Finding a Needle in a Hay Stack

“Finding a marrow/stem cell match can be like finding a needle in a haystack,” says Carol Gillespie, AADP executive director. “Patients need a marrow/stem cell transplant as soon as possible. Saving lives is what we’re about. People of all ethnicities are encouraged to join the Be The Match registry. You could potentially match anyone in the world, this is truly a global effort.”

Marrow/stem cell matches are very different than blood type matches. Just as we inherit our eyes, hair and skin color, we inherit our marrow and stem cell tissue type.

“Those whose marrow/stem cells are not a match for a patient in need now may be a match for someone else down the road,” Gillespie says. “Registering to be a marrow/stem cell donor is simple.”

Donors must be in good general health and between the ages of 18 and 60. In particular, younger donors between the ages of 18 and 44 are needed. Younger donors are best for patients because they provide the greatest chance for transplant success.

For information, call the Asian American Donor Program staff at 1-800-593-6667 or visit <http://www.aadp.org/>

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