

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

San Francisco, CA – Jeremy Kong, 2 years old, was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia (AML) on June 27, 2012. He is in urgent need of a marrow transplant. This procedure is Jeremy's only hope for his long-term survival. A marrow/stem cell matching donor must be located before any transplant takes place. Jeremy is Chinese and lives in San Francisco. His parents were born and raised in San Francisco.

“Our hearts have been heavy since his diagnosis, but completely broke at the thought of losing our son,” says Anthony Kang, Jeremy's father.

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 Chinese, Asian and non-Caucasian heritage to join the Registry and potentially save a life. Each of us can “Be The One to Save a Life!” For Jeremy, as no family members are a match, it is likely that someone of Chinese 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.

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

Sept 22, 2012 (Sat)

Ranch 99 Concord

1795 Willow Pass Road, Concord CA 94520
11am-3pm

Sept 22, 2012 (Sat)

St Patrick Proto Cathedral

389 East Santa Clara Street, San Jose CA 95113
9am-1pm

Sept 22, 2012 (Sat)

18th Street Asian Health Fair, Oakland

310 E 18th Street, Oakland CA 94606
Walgreen’s parking lot
10am-2pm

Sept 22, 2012 (Sat)

Alice Fong Yu School, San Francisco

1541 12th Ave, San Francisco CA 94122
10am-2pm

Sept 22, 2012 (Sat)

Sunset Community Festival

3223 Ortega Street, San Francisco CA 94122
11am-3pm

Sept 23, 2012 (Sun)

Holy Name of Jesus Parish, SF

1555 39th Ave, San Francisco CA 94122
Lower Hall
10:30am-1:30pm

Sept 23, 2012 (Sun)

Sharon Chinese Baptist Church, SF

1620 Irving Street, San Francisco CA 94122
1:30pm-3:30pm

Sept 23, 2012 (Sun)

Saint Anne of the Sunset Church

Lower hall: entrance on the 1300 block of Funston Ave
850 Judah Street, San Francisco CA 94112
10am-1:30pm

- 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 Jeremy Kong

Jeremy is much like other 2 year olds. He loves to run, jump, climb, play, dance, and sing. He enjoys story time at the public library, the playground, San Francisco Zoo, and the California Academy of Sciences. He is a precocious little boy, always curious and eager to show us new things that he's learned or discovered.

Jeremy is of Chinese ancestry. So, it is likely that his donor will also be Chinese. All Asians are encouraged to register as a potential marrow donors.

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.

AADP (www.aadp.org), a community-based nonprofit organization with offices in Alameda, CA, was the first recruitment organization of its kind in the country. Currently, there are two Asian-focused, community-based nonprofits in California, with one in southern California and one in northern California. After that, there is only one other Asian-focused recruitment organization in the U.S. and it is on the other side of the country, in New York City.

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

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