

Contact: Sally Douglas Arce
Media Relations, Asian American Donor Program (AADP)
510-525-9552 • sdarce@lmi.net

Marrow Recipient Meets Her Donor For the first time, a 12-Year-Old Girl Meets the Stranger who Saved her Life !

Oakland, CA, July 28, 2015 – Mailyna Mayate, a 12-year-old girl who lives in Castro Valley, met the woman who saved her life, who lives in the Providence, Rhode Island area. She was born with Beta Thalassemia Major, a blood disorder that reduces the production of hemoglobin. Hemoglobin is the iron-containing protein in red blood cells that carries oxygen to cells throughout the body. Before finding a matching donor and having a marrow transplant, Mailyna needed to have monthly blood transfusions and daily medications to make sure her immune system functioned properly.

Mailyna is of Filipino descent and so is her donor Kristine Sydney. The Asian American Donor Program (AADP), a nonprofit organization, coordinated registration events through the Bay Area for Mailyna. AADP hosted the press conference and presented Mailyna and Kristine with a beautiful matching double heart bracelets inscribed with “Mailyna and Kristine –Forever One May 8, 2014.”

"It is such an honor to see Mailyna meet her donor," said Dr. Stacy Month, the medical director of pediatric hematology oncology at Kaiser Permanente's Oakland Medical Center, who spoke at the July 28th press conference. “The fact that a donor was found speaks to the incredible work of the Asian American Donor Program and all its volunteers to get the word out and increase the number of people willing to be potential donors. This reunion highlights the power of donation and reinforces that one person can truly make a difference in the life of another."

More about Mailyna Mayate

Mailyna, who was born in the United States, was diagnosed at birth with Beta Thalassemia Major, for which a bone marrow transplant is the only cure. In April 2013, Mailyna and her mother were told she needed a transplant. The search for a matching marrow donor began in earnest. A donor was found and the transplant date was May 8, 2015 at USCF. All of Mailyna’s pre-transplant and post-transplant care took place at Kaiser Permanente in Oakland.

This fall Mailyna will be in the 8th grade. She loves math, art and English. She is excited to return to school, happy and healthy for the first time in her life.

Marrow Recipient Meets Her Donor
Press Release, July 28, 2015

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. This is why this meeting is so important and rare.

More about Kristine Sydney

Kristine Sydney donated her marrow to Mailyna. Kristine lives in Providence, Rhode Island, where she teaches English to 9th to 12th graders at the Wheeler School, a coeducational, independent day school located on the East Side of Providence. The school serves students from the nursery level through twelfth-grade.

Kristine is of Filipino descent. She was born in Manila, the Philippines, and grew up in the Middle East. In 1994, Kristine moved to the United States, where she attended boarding school.

On a blog, Kristine wrote, "A year ago (now it is more than a year ago), I registered to be a bone marrow donor. Because I spent significant time in the Philippines and grew up in the Middle East, I am not eligible to donate blood. I erroneously assumed that I was not allowed to donate bone marrow, either. I was wrong. I learned the truth when the college that was running the drive actively encouraged *all* persons of color to register."

In Gratitude

The following individuals donors have helped defray travel costs and related expenses for this press conference: S. Nakamura, Kikue Johnson, Amelia Diaz, Sim Gopalan, Uta Tsai, Shari Fredrickson, the Myla Cunanan family, Pat Da Silva-Fong, Scott Wilms and Katie Jones.

AADP extends its heartfelt thanks to Best Western Plus El Rancho Inn (<http://www.elranchoinn.com/>) that provided hotel stay for Kristine Sydney and her husband for 7 days. Many thanks go to Adam Willis of AV Spaces for providing the sound equipment.

To learn more about scheduled upcoming marrow drives, visit <http://www.aadp.org/drive/>

For press questions, contact Sally Douglas Arce at 510-525-9552 or sdarce@lmi.net

###