

Health Matters

Three Ways To Help Save A Life

(NAPSA)—Ordinary people can do the extraordinary: Help save a life. Your marrow donation, your financial contribution, your time and energy—any and all of these gifts can result in a cure for someone like Valaria Fenderson.

Just 12 years old, Valaria's been admitted to the hospital more than most people. The reason: sickle cell anemia. This inherited blood disorder has plagued Valaria since birth, causing frequent bouts of debilitating pain in her legs, back and chest.

Valaria longs for the day when this pain is gone—a day when she can feel normal—and a marrow transplant is the only way this dream can come true.

However, no one in her family is a matching donor. Her doctors have turned to the Be The Match Registry—the world's largest listing of potential marrow donors—to search for one selfless stranger who could save her life.

A marrow transplant can cure someone with sickle cell anemia or life-threatening blood cancers, but like Valaria, most patients do not have matching donors within their families; that's why Be The Match's mission is so vital. The nonprofit organization connects patients with donors and facilitates lifesaving transplants.

Adding more potential donors to the registry is crucial. If you're between the ages of 18 and 44, you're especially needed. Research shows that such donors provide the greatest chance for transplant success.

You can join the registry at a registry drive or sign up online at BeTheMatch.org. Potential donors must meet age and health guidelines and be willing to donate to any patient in need. Each registrant completes a health history form and provides a swab of cheek cells.



Half of all patients don't receive the transplant they need—but you can help change that.

Registering isn't the only way you can help. Financial donations help patients afford medical procedures, fund clinical research to improve transplant outcomes and bring a patient a step closer to a cure.

Volunteering is a third way to help. You could organize a registry drive and recruit donors at your school, church or civic center or consider volunteering at a Be The One Run fundraising run-walk event.

The bottom line: Every registry member, every contributor and every volunteer increases the odds that a critically ill person will have a second chance at life.

Valaria is still looking for that second chance. "She's in less pain now but she still needs a transplant," her mother said. "I'm confident that Valaria's match is out there—just an ordinary person who realizes that he or she can become the cure for someone battling sickle cell anemia and blood cancers." Are you that person?

To find out how you can help, visit www.BeTheMatch.org or call (800) MARROW2.