

# Unsung Heroes

## Saying Yes To Saving A Life

(NAPSA)—Here's good news about health and heroism in America today: More than 10.5 million people have made the commitment to donate marrow to a patient—a stranger—by joining the world's largest volunteer marrow donor registry, the Be The Match Registry.

### The Challenge

Unfortunately, nearly half of those identified as a potential match for a patient don't go on to donate.

The reasons are many. The potential donor's health status may have changed, their contact information may be outdated or they may have decided they no longer want to donate.

A study published in the medical journal *Blood* found that among those who no longer want to donate, the most common reason is feeling anxious or worried about donation.

Ultimately, Be The Match is able to find matching, available donors for 66 percent to 93 percent of patients, depending on race or ethnicity. But unavailable donors can cause critical delays for patients waiting for a transplant, and for some patients it means that no match can be found.

### What's Being Done

To help, Be The Match takes several important steps to improve donor availability, including educating people throughout the recruitment and donation process—dispelling myths about donation, answering questions and helping potential donors understand the life-saving impact they can have.

Current registry members are also regularly contacted to renew their commitment to save a life. But more committed, potential donors need to join the registry and donate if called. Growing a



**You may be able to save someone's life by volunteering to be a bone marrow donor.**

larger and more diverse registry is one of the single most important ways to help more patients find a matched—and available—donor.

### How To Join The Heroes

If you are thinking of joining the Be The Match Registry, there are a few things to keep in mind:

- **Get the facts**—Be sure you understand what to expect when you join the registry so you feel comfortable with your decision.

- **Keep loved ones in the loop**—When you join the registry, tell friends and family to ensure that they understand and support your decision.

- **Stay in touch**—Update contact information regularly so you can be located quickly if you are identified as a match. Simply visit [www.BeTheMatch.org](http://www.BeTheMatch.org) or call (800) MARROW-2.

- **Update your health status**—Inform the registry of health changes that could make you ineligible to donate, even temporarily.

- **Step up and save a life**—If called to donate and potentially save a life, say yes.

### Learn More

To find out how you can help, visit [www.BeTheMatch.org](http://www.BeTheMatch.org) or call (800) MARROW-2.