

Health Awareness

Donating Marrow Can Save Lives

(NAPSA)—You can be a hero and save a life. It can be a lot easier than many people realize, when you volunteer to become a potential marrow donor.

One Young Woman's Story

Consider the case of Erin Wright. On her 15th birthday, she wished she could donate marrow to a stranger—a wish that took more than a decade to come true.

Determined to help others survive, Wright joined the Be The Match Registry when she turned 18. With more than 9.5 million members, the registry is the world's largest listing of potential marrow and peripheral blood stem cell donors.

Eight years later, she learned she was a match for a young boy who had leukemia and needed a marrow transplant. The procedure was a success and the boy is doing well today.

Her story illustrates the serious commitment that comes with registering as a potential marrow donor. While some volunteers are quickly matched with patients in need, others may wait years. That's why the National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP), which operates the Be The Match Registry, emphasizes the importance of commitment to all potential donors during the recruitment process.

Seeking Youth

While most people ages 18 to 60 are eligible to join the Be The Match Registry, adding more young potential donors is critical to increasing the likelihood of transplant success.

"Research shows that utilizing marrow cells from younger donors gives patients a better outcome," explained Jeffrey W. Chell, M.D., chief executive officer of the NMDP. "That's why registry members between the ages of 18 and 44 are



Erin Wright hopes that her story inspires more young people to register as potential donors.

10 times more likely to be called as donors than others on the registry."

While Wright achieved her wish to be a marrow donor, she is acutely aware of those patients still waiting for lifesaving transplants. More than 70 percent of people who need transplants don't have matching donors in their families and they depend on the Be The Match Registry to find a match. Wright is committed to encouraging more potential donors to join the registry.

"It was a profound privilege to help save another person's life," Erin said. "I hope my story inspires more young people to register as potential donors and give others hope for a second chance at life."

Be a Part of the Solution

Joining the registry is easy—just a swab of the cheek is all that's required to gather the cells necessary for testing. Beyond joining the Be The Match Registry, those interested in helping save lives can volunteer their time, contribute money or simply spread the word.

Learn More

For more information, visit www.BeTheMatch.org or call (800) MARROW-2.