



# Pointers For Parents-To-Be

## How Asian-American Families Can Help Save Lives

(NAPSA)—Approximately 11,000 babies are born each day in the United States. When these babies are born, many of their parents have the option to not only welcome a new life but to potentially save another life—perhaps that of someone like Thuy Diem Tran.

When Tran was just 27 years old, she noticed that whenever she scratched, a rash instantly developed. “One day I was shopping and tried on lip gloss, pressing my lips together, and the next day my lips were black with bruising.”

She was diagnosed with aplastic anemia and told she would need a marrow or umbilical cord blood transplant to live.

### **Public Cord Blood Donation: Giving Birth to Hope**

Thanks to generous parents who donated their baby’s umbilical cord blood to a public cord blood bank, Tran got the transplant that changed the course of her life. Today, she and her husband Stephen are the proud parents of a young son, Jaxon.

“Now we really immerse ourselves in our family and friends,” she says. “Having this experience put my life into perspective.”

Most patients who need transplants, like Tran, do not have a match in their family and depend on the Be The Match Registry, operated by the National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP). The tissue types used for matching patients with donors are inherited, so patients are most likely to find a match within their own racial or ethnic heritage.

Unfortunately, many mothers



**Thuy Diem Tran and her family are grateful to the generous parents who donated to a public cord blood bank.**

are unaware of the opportunity to donate cord blood or that there is a critical need for more donations, especially within the Asian community. Donations from Asian mothers represent just 7 percent of the more than 145,000 cord blood units listed on the registry.

Tran now talks to expectant mothers, especially those in the Asian community, to encourage them to learn about cord blood donation and its growing use to treat life-threatening diseases.

“Look at me. What more can I say?” she tells them. “It’s such a small action that can mean the world to someone else.”

### **How It Works**

When expectant parents choose to donate their baby’s cord blood to a public cord blood bank, the cord blood is collected immediately after the baby is born and does not interfere with labor,

delivery or the health of the mother or the newborn in any way. The cord blood is then stored at a public cord blood bank and listed on the registry.

As a treatment option, cord blood is especially useful for several reasons:

- More patients can find a suitable, unrelated match because cord blood doesn’t have to match a patient’s tissue type as closely as donated marrow.

- Donated cord blood is stored and readily available, so it’s useful for people who need a transplant quickly.

There has been tremendous growth over the last few years in the number of cord blood transplants facilitated. But while many people find the match they need, donations from parents of diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds will help ensure many more have access to this potentially lifesaving treatment.

Unlike with private cord blood banking, there’s no cost to donate to a public cord blood bank. Prospective parents can ask if the hospital they’ll use is in the Be The Match network. If not, they can still help save a life by contacting Be The Match. Limited donations of this kind are accepted as long as the obstetrician or midwife agrees to do the collection.

### **Learn More**

Expectant parents can visit [www.BeTheMatch.org/cordblood](http://www.BeTheMatch.org/cordblood) for a list of participating hospitals and to learn more about donation opportunities. They can also call (800) 627-7692.