



Health Bulletin



NMDP And USPS Help Create Connections To Save Lives

(NAPSA)—It isn't often that a person gets the opportunity to save a life, much less the same life twice, but that's what happened to Darryl Forbes, a father of three who twice donated marrow and blood cells to the same man.

The life Forbes saved—twice—belonged to someone he had never met, Karriem B. Ali, the father of nine children and grandfather of 19. Ali had been diagnosed with leukemia and needed a volunteer donor for his lifesaving marrow transplant. Without a marrow donor in his family, Ali sought help from the National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP), which identified Forbes as a suitable donor and helped facilitate Ali's transplant. Ali received a transplant of marrow cells from Forbes in June 2003.

When the transplant did not progress as the doctors had hoped, Ali's doctor decided he would need a second transplant. Forbes was approached for a second donation and once again, he rose to the occasion. After a year, the two men eventually met. Being a donor was such a positive experience for Forbes that he said, "I'd do it again in a heartbeat."

Marrow and blood cell transplants require matching certain tissue traits of the donor and patient. Because these traits are inherited, a patient's most likely match is



Karriem Ali (left) is alive today because of Darryl Forbes' (right) life-saving marrow and blood cell donations.

someone of the same heritage. Blacks and African Americans also tend to be more genetically diverse than other populations, which may make finding a donor more challenging for some patients.

The NMDP works to help more Black and African-American patients receive the transplants that can save their lives in many ways. One way is to enlist the support of organizations with diverse workplaces, such as the United States Postal Service (USPS). Forbes' lifesaving donation is an example of how such corporate support can help save lives.

Forbes has been a postal employee for many years and

supervises delivery at the Elmwood Village Post Office in West Hartford, Conn. In 1997, NMDP and its partner, The Marrow Foundation, established "Delivering the Gift of Life: 3M U.S. Postal Service Minority Marrow Donor Recruitment Campaign," designed to add employees from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds to the NMDP's Registry. Since its inception, the campaign has added more than 21,000 volunteers from the USPS to the Registry, and more than 50 postal employees have gone on to be donors.

Joining the Registry is an easy and simple way to help preserve healthy Black and African-American communities. Ali and Forbes encourage Black and African Americans to be marrow donors. "It could be your family who could be struck with the illness. It could be your loved one or a friend," Ali said.

The NMDP helps people who need a lifesaving marrow or blood cell transplant by connecting patients, doctors, donors and researchers to the resources they need to help more people live longer and healthier lives. To learn more about how you can help support the search to make lifesaving transplants a reality for patients, visit www.marrow.org or call 1 (800) MARROW-2.