

# A B C D E F G H Children's Health

## Relying On The Strength Of A Mother

(NAPSA)—A mother's strength seems to defy the laws of physics, with some moms supporting and fighting for their children for longer than might seem humanly possible.

One mother's battle for her children can serve as an inspiration for anyone who wants to make a difference.

Jessica Pasley knows what strength means. Nine years ago, Jessica and her husband, Irvin, were blessed with twin girls, Jillian and Jade. Amidst the joy that new babies bring, the Pasley family could not foresee that in a year their strength would be tested and a fight for life would begin.

Several months after her birth, Jade developed an ear infection that would not heal. After several trips to the doctor, a blood test revealed that 1-year-old Jade had acute myelogenous leukemia (AML).

Jade's only option for survival was to have a marrow transplant. Jessica, Irvin, their 5-year-old son Myles, and baby Jillian were all tested to see if they could be a potential marrow donor for Jade.

Instead of a miracle, the Pasley family was faced with more tragic news. Not only was there not a match for Jade in their family, but Jillian's blood test showed that she too might develop leukemia. A few months later, both Pasley girls were in the hospital holding on to life.

Throughout this ordeal, Jessica remained strong and decided to do everything she could to help save her daughters. She started a search for a marrow donor on the



**Mother urges more African Americans to join the National Marrow Donor Program Registry to save more lives.**

National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP) Registry.

The NMDP makes lifesaving marrow and cord blood transplants possible for individuals who do not have a matched donor in their family.

According to the NMDP, only 30 percent of patients find a matched donor in their family. The other 70 percent can turn to the NMDP to search for an unrelated donor.

Marrow transplants require matching certain tissue traits of the donor and patient.

Because these traits are inherited, a patient's most likely match is someone of the same heritage. Despite a lack of minority donors on the NMDP Registry, donors were found for both girls.

Unfortunately, Jade died a few months after transplantation. Jillian, now 9 years old, has had two transplants from the same donor. Jillian calls him "hero."

Experiencing cancer with two children has been overwhelming

to the family. Jessica and Irvin found strength from their children to endure the transplant journey.

Jessica's story of strength does not end here. Jessica is fiercely committed to encouraging more African Americans to join the NMDP Registry. "Hello! Wake up! Are we killing off our own by not stepping up? Are we turning our heads, expecting someone else to do the job?" asks Jessica.

Joining the registry is painless and requires only a swab of cheek cells. Due to genetics, individuals in need of a transplant will most likely find a match within their own ethnic group. "Get educated. Tell others. Get registered," urges Jessica.

The NMDP make it easy for people wanting to save lives to join the registry. Attending a marrow donor drive is one way to register. The largest of these drives is the Thanks Mom! Marrow Donor Drive that is held from May 7-May 21 and corresponds with Mother's Day.

For two weeks, Thanks Mom! drives are held all over the country. The second way one can join the registry is to visit [marrow.org](http://marrow.org) and order a kit to collect a swab of cheek cells for tissue typing.

Joining and diversifying the NMDP Registry is extremely important, but equally important is having strength. Strength to believe that you can be the one to save a life.

For more information about the National Marrow Donor Program and how you can save a life, visit [marrow.org](http://marrow.org) or call (800) MARROW-2.