



Health Awareness

Support Is Important For Success Of Marrow And Cord Blood Transplants

(NAPSA)—Twenty years ago, options for patients diagnosed with leukemia or lymphoma were limited and survival rates were low. One treatment that has shown tremendous scientific advancement is bone marrow and cord blood transplantation using an unrelated donor.

Advances in transplant science have improved outcomes and have made transplant a viable treatment option for more patients and a wider range of diseases. Because of the improving outcomes, transplantation may offer the highest likelihood of survival for a growing number of patients. More than 70 diseases, including leukemia and lymphoma, are treated with transplant.

While a transplant may cure the disease, transplant recipients often need long-term follow-up care after they return home. Survival rates and quality of life have increased because of a greater understanding of the needs in this patient population.

The National Marrow Donor Program's (NMDP) Office of Patient Advocacy (OPA) develops programs and resources to support the needs of transplant recipients from diagnosis through survivorship. Today, the NMDP's OPA is leading a new initiative to support patients and their physicians in providing care following transplant. A partnership with 20 patient-focused organizations, including the Lance Armstrong Foundation, The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society and the National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship, will increase the aware-



Advances in transplant science have improved outcomes and have made transplant a viable treatment option for patients like Nicki Kremer.

ness and education needed to care for this patient population.

Through a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the NMDP's OPA and its partners will develop a comprehensive list of transplant survivor resources, conduct provider training on transplant survivor issues and create comprehensive care plan guidelines for providers.

The NMDP recently described how this kind of support proved crucial to 24-year-old Nicki Kremer. She needed a bone marrow transplant to survive an aggressive form of leukemia. Fortunately, a matched marrow donor was found on the NMDP Registry and she received a life-saving transplant in 2005.

Now a three-year cancer survivor, Kremer is committed to helping other survivors like her.

While launching her career as an interior designer, Kremer is also giving back to help others like her. At the center where she was treated, she is a patient advocate to help shape services to better support patients during their treatment and recovery.

In addition to the resources offered by organizations such as the NMDP, community support can be a powerful tool to help survivors overcome posttreatment challenges. It's easy to help without being intrusive:

- Strike a note of support. You may never know the incredible impact a card or a phone call can have on a survivor's spirits.

- Volunteer your time. There are many organizations, both locally and nationally, that support survivors. These include the National Marrow Donor Program, Lance Armstrong Foundation and The Wellness Community, as well as local chapters of the American Cancer Society and The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. Volunteers are always needed at these and many other organizations.

- Share stories. Visit <http://foundation.marrow.org/LifeJourneys> and create an NMDP LifeJourneys tribute page to share your story, honor or memorialize a loved one, recognize an accomplishment or milestone or just to say thank you.

- Join the fight for other survivors. Even if you aren't close to a cancer patient in your community, you can help others.

To learn more or register to be a marrow donor, visit the National Marrow Donor Program online at www.marrow.org/join.