

Stem Cell Donor Drive for David Turrisi-Chung

Centenary College, 400 Jefferson St, Hackettstown, NJ

Wednesday, Nov 18, 11 am – 6 pm (Donor Drive)

Thursday, Nov 19, 11:30 am – 6 pm (Donor Drive)

Thursday, Dec 3, 5 pm – 8 pm (Donor Drive and Fundraiser)

We are hosting a donor drive on the campus of Centenary College to get as many people registered with the National Marrow Donor Program as possible, and to raise awareness about donating lifesaving stem cells to people like our friend David Turrisi-Chung, Professor Kathy Turrisi's husband, who was recently diagnosed with MDS. This is a simple swab of your cheeks to collect cells for a DNA test. If those are a match for David or someone else in need, further tests are performed and a simple procedure conducted where your blood is drawn from one arm and run through a machine, which extracts the stem cells, and then your blood is returned through the other arm. Those are the stem cells that could save David's life!

Myelodysplastic syndromes (MDS) are a group of diseases that affect the bone marrow and blood. Some types of MDS are mild and easily managed, while other types are severe and life-threatening. Mild MDS can grow more severe over time. It can also develop into a fast-growing, severe leukemia called acute myelogenous leukemia. Stem cell transplant (SCT) is the only treatment that can cure MDS. In this treatment, the patient receives high-dose chemotherapy and/or total body irradiation to kill the cells in the bone marrow (including the abnormal bone marrow cells). Then the patient receives new, functioning blood-forming stem cells harvested from the donor. See David Turrisi-Chung's story below:

My name is David Turrisi-Chung. I am married with two boys and, at the age of 44, battling MDS. Life expectancy for an MDS patient is about three years on average, unless a transplant of stem cells from a suitable donor is performed. In my case, I am looking at possibly less than a year given I have a more aggressive form of MDS. The only cure to a full and normal life is a stem cell transplant. I am in a race against time. A donor search initiated through the National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP) has yielded some possible donors as potential matches. Further testing will hopefully lead to a suitable donor. Testing for a donor and match is costly and *unfortunately, my health insurance does not cover these costs*. If these donors do not work out, the search will continue with a much larger pool of potential donors.



Donor drives are being hosted by Centenary College, Be The Match Foundation (aka NMDP, www.marrow.org), and The Cammy Lee Foundation . For drive info, send an email to Lynn Taylor at taylorl@centenarycollege.edu. For fundraiser info (dinner, wine tasting, silent auction), please contact Kathy Phil at 908.852.1400x2300. David's website is www.caringbridge.org/visit/davidturrisichung