



MEDIA ADVISORY

Faith and Diversity Join Together to Raise Awareness

'Trinity of Leaders' aim to increase Chinese Canadian stem cell donation

For Immediate Release

WHAT: OneMatch Stem Cell and Marrow Network and OtherHalf - Chinese Stem Cell Initiative are very pleased to be holding an informal media opportunity to announce the partnership between three (3) socially motivated faith based organizations and their commitment to increasing the number of Chinese Canadian stem cell donors in Canada's stem cell network. **Scarborough Chinese Baptist Church** (Toronto), **Richmond Hill Chinese Baptist Church** (Richmond Hill) and **Guelph Cambridge Chinese Alliance Church** (Guelph); will be holding individual DNA sample collection events (oral swabs) at their church locations during July, August and September. The pastors and their congregations are firmly behind the efforts of OtherHalf - Chinese Stem Cell Initiative as they continue their 'Summer of Saving Lives' campaign to raise awareness around the low participation of Chinese Canadians on the stem cell network. At the same time, all three (3) churches will be providing actual DNA samples for testing in the hopes of matching a patient waiting for a stem cell transplant. **The public is reminded to bring OHIP or government issued health card for registration.**

22-year old leukemia patient, Steve Pho, is one of many patients searching for a matched donor for stem cell transplant. These are patients suffering from blood cancers (leukemia, lymphoma, myeloma) and other immune and genetic disorders.

Canada's stem cell network is 82% Caucasian and **only 1.4% of Canada's stem cell registrants are from Chinese heritage.** With the likelihood of finding a match far greater within one's own ethnic group, more donors from diverse backgrounds are needed to sign up for the OneMatch Stem Cell and Marrow Network. Equally, only 30% of patients will find a match within their own family, while the other 70 per cent must depend on the generosity of unrelated donors. At any given time at least 760 Canadian patients facing life-threatening illnesses are in need of a stem cell transplant.

WHO: Interviews and photo opportunities with:

- 3 Chinese Pastors: Rev. Warren Lai, Rev. William Wong, Rev. Vincent Lai
- Dr. Ming Jarm Lau M.D. to speak to the need for more Chinese Canadians to become stem cell donors
- Ashley Nguyen, representing Steven Pho's family
- Chairperson of OtherHalf: Susan Go
- OneMatch Stem Cell and Marrow Network: John Bromley

WHEN: **10:30 a.m., Tuesday July 21st, 2009**

WHERE: Canadian Blood Services, 67 College Street West in Toronto, Ontario.