



MEDIA ADVISORY

‘Summer of Saving Lives’ – Part II

Local Chinese Group Promoting Stem Cell Awareness

Toronto, July 8, 2009

Who/What:

Canada’s OneMatch Stem Cell and Marrow Network and OtherHalf - Chinese Stem Cell Initiative are pleased to announce, as part of the “Summer of Saving Lives” Campaign, our participation at ‘Night it Up’ on July 10th & 11th at Metro Square Mall (3636 Steeles Avenue E. near Warden). ‘Night it Up’ is the hottest Asian Youth summer event in Toronto featuring a variety of stage performances, games, booths and all kinds of exotic foods found at traditional night markets all over Asia. This event will attract over 60,000 young patrons in 2 days.

During this event, our youth volunteers will be specifically calling on **Asians 17 – 50 years of age** to help Steve Pho, and patients like him, by registering with OneMatch. Steve is a 22-year old Vietnamese Chinese York University student who has been diagnosed with leukemia and is desperately searching for an unrelated matched donor for stem cell transplant. Without a matched donor, he has only months to live. Currently there are at least 30 other Chinese and Southeast Asian patients like Steve in Canada waiting for a stem cell donor. For these patients, their only hope for survival is to find an unrelated matched stem cell donor for transplants.

Canada’s stem cell network is 82% Caucasian and **less than 2% Chinese & Southeast Asian**. With the likelihood of finding a match far greater within one’s own ethnic group, more new donors from diverse backgrounds are needed in OneMatch Stem Cell and Marrow Network. Equally, **only 30% of patients will find a match within their own families**, while the other 70 per cent must depend on the generosity of unrelated donors.

The ‘Summer of Saving Lives’ has been organized to increase the number of Chinese stem cell donors by stem cell advocates -- OtherHalf. OtherHalf has strategically positioned different awareness events to offer the Chinese community an opportunity to register with OneMatch and provide their DNA sample for testing. DNA sample collection, or oral swabbing, is a convenient and easy way for Canadians to join the stem cell network by simply swabbing the inside of their mouths. **This registration process takes only about 10 minutes.**

This weekend, OneMatch and OtherHalf, in an effort to bring Steve Pho’s urgent need to the forefront, will be targeting the Asian community to increase the number of Asian stem cell registrants in Canada and throughout the world. Donor registration will take place inside the mall entrance at Metro Square Mall on **Friday from 7 pm – 1 am and Saturday 1 pm – 1 am. Please bring OHIP or government issued health card for registration.**

Patients needing stem cells transplants include those suffering from blood cancers such as leukemia, lymphoma, myeloma, and other immune and genetic disorders.

Summer of Saving Lives Awareness Events will be supporting DNA sample collection (oral swab).