



MEDIA ADVISORY

All Students are Urged to Help Local Stem Cell Patients Steve and Jason

Local Community Group Links with York University Student Group to Increase Younger Participation on Canada's Stem Cell Network

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WHAT: OneMatch Stem Cell and Marrow Network are very pleased to support the continued efforts of the OtherHalf Chinese Stem Cell Initiative while they expand their commitment towards increasing ethnic diversity on Canada's stem cell network. The need is immediate for donors within all ethnic diversities especially as two York U patients are currently waiting for a transplant. Youth donation is a critical issue facing Canada's stem cell network as currently 15% of the network is between 55 and 60 years-old and will be leaving the stem cell program over the next 5-years. Only 11% of the network is made up from young males 40 and under -- younger stem cells from donors possess the increased ability to engraft post transplant. Male stem cells show an even greater propensity for engraftment.

With these alarming statistics in mind, and needing to help their fellow York University students Steve and Jason, student group Hong Kong Student Association of York University Keele Campus have linked with OtherHalf to operate an awareness event with DNA sample collection (buccal swabs) at York. This event will be part of York University's community blood donor clinic to help patients like Steve and Jason.

WHY: Canada's stem cell network is 82% Caucasian and **only 1.4% of Canada's stem cell registrants are from Chinese heritage**. At press time, there are **20** patients waiting for an unrelated stem cell transplant, **eight** of those here in Ontario.

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 830 Canadian patients facing life-threatening illnesses are in need of a stem cell transplant.

WHEN & WHERE: On Tuesday November 10th from 10:00am until 5:00pm The Bear Pit, Central Square, York University (Keele Campus), volunteers and OneMatch will be providing actual DNA samples for testing in the hopes of matching a patient waiting for a stem cell transplant – as Steve and Jason. **Students are reminded to bring OHIP or government issued health card for registration.**

WHO: Interviews and photo opportunities with:

OtherHalf Chinese Stem Cell Initiative Chairperson Susan Go

Chai Chai Kwok, Hong Kong Student Association York University, Treasurer

Hailu Mulatu, OneMatch Stem Cell and Marrow Network

Potential stem cell donors swabbing (as seen in television show CSI)