



Marrow drive planned for April 19

By Lynn Davidson Staff Writer

After her daughter's life was saved through the generosity of an anonymous donor, one local woman is organizing a drive in hopes of helping others. Karen McTier said her 15-year-old daughter, Katelyn, had been through chemo treatments for leukemia, but the cancer came back. Three years ago, she received a bone marrow transplant, and has enjoyed life ever since.

"At that point, we were really at life or death," Ms. McTier said. "For us, it was a total, unrelated perfect match who was on the registry. All we know is she was a 43-year-old female, and she chose not to meet our family, which was fine. But, she really saved Katelyn's life."

Now Ms. McTier has organized a donor drive to hopefully find a donor for another Thomson teen who is a candidate for bone marrow transplant. Hammond Bold, Jr., 19, is currently undergoing treatments at Emory University for aplastic anemia. If the treatment does not work, Hammond will require a bone marrow transplant.

A marrow drive will be held at Marshall Baptist Church from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m., Saturday, April 19, in the fellowship hall.

Ms. McTier said there is a cost of joining the registry of \$52 per donor. This cost covers the tissue-typing (HLA) and adding the donor to the registry. But Ms. McTier has received some community-matching funds which will reduce the cost to \$25 per person. "We are praying for the remaining funds so our Marrow Donor Drive will be at no expense to each donor," she said.

According to the national marrow donor website, there are more than 6,000 men, women and children in need of a donor. These patients have leukemia, lymphoma and other life-threatening diseases that can be treated by a bone marrow or cord blood transplant. For many of these patients, a transplant may be their only hope of a cure.

"I think that's just the issue, people probably aren't aware of the need for it," Ms. McTier said. "And when you talk to people, they say they'll never do it because it hurts so bad. And it may be uncomfortable, but there's a lot of false information out there, too, about how bad it is. It saves lives."

The drive at Marshall Baptist is simply to sign a consent form and join the registry. Ms. McTier said each person who registers will be notified if they are chosen.

She said the marrow donor registry is also in need of donors from racially and ethnically diverse communities. Today, there simply aren't enough registered donors of diverse racial and ethnic heritage. Adding more diverse donors increases the likelihood that all patients will find a match.

Marshall is located at 436 Marshall Church Road, Thomson, GA 30824. For more information, visit www.marrow.org or call Karen McTier at 706-595-6325 (email kmctier@hughes.net).