



## **Brian Long's marrow donation gives stranger a second chance**

By **Chyna Broadnax** Saturday, April 5, 2008

Brian Long was given a second chance at making something out of his life as a teenager.

The ex-gang member said he was heading down the wrong path and was given another shot at redemption after a judge reduced his prison sentence.

Since then Long has taken it upon himself to become an activist of sorts in the community.

"I was given a second chance so if I can help somebody have a second chance I'm going to do it," he said.



The 25-year-old wears many hats as a motivational speaker, role model for youth, in addition to his varying duties with Appropriate Placement Options Inc.

Through his efforts he strives to help people in the community make a change for the better.

Now he is giving of himself again, but in a very different capacity.

Long is donating bone marrow to a 26-year-old woman diagnosed with acute leukemia.

"If I was dying I would want someone to take time out to help," he explained. "Everybody deserves a second chance to live again."

Donating to a stranger doesn't bother Long in the least bit. He hopes to one day be able to meet her.

He underwent surgery Thursday and Friday at Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center in Winston-Salem.

A couple years ago he put his name on a donor list at Mitchell Community College and thought his chances of being called upon were slim to none.

That phone call came about two months ago.

"I didn't think I'd really get called," Long said.

Feeling it was predestined for him to give of himself in such a way, Long instantly agreed.

For the past two months he has submitted to a series of tests. The most physically grueling part began last week when he began getting shots daily to build up his white blood cell count.

The process to prepare for the surgery is tedious and took a toll on his body, with the shots making him tired.

Although the process has been arduous, Long has never thought about backing out of the commitment he made.

"I'm in this to the end," he said.

Long said he wouldn't have the opportunity to help others had he not been given another opportunity himself.

"It's not about me," he said. "I learn that more and more every day.

"I have a lot to do that God wants me to do."

APO Executive Director Pam Navey, who has worked with Long for two years, said he is one of the most self-sacrificing people she knows.

He is willing to do anything in his power to help someone in need.

"He is always thinking about other people and what he can do to make a difference in other people's lives," she said.