

HELPING OUT: *Student organizes bone marrow drive*

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By Macklin Reid, Ridgefield Press Staff



Molly Golstein has organized a drive for this coming Sunday, March 30, to find potential blood marrow donors.

Moved by the thought young children facing life without their mother, a Scotts Ridge Middle School student is organizing a bone marrow donor drive in hopes of helping people with leukemia and other blood cancers.

Molly Goldstein of West Mountain Road was originally inspired by the case of a New York City woman, Lisa Gershowitz Flynn, who has two young children.

"A few months ago Lisa found out she has cancer," Molly wrote in a letter publicizing drive, planned for Sunday, March 30, from 11 to 2 at Temple Shearith Israel, 46 Peaceable Street.

“She has been very brave and very strong, but she is in desperate need of a bone marrow transplant, and I want to help.

“I am only 12 years old and unfortunately cannot be tested to see if my bone marrow can save her life, but I would love to help in any possible way I can. That’s why I want to work my hardest to get people to register to see if they can save Lisa’s life, or the life of someone else in desperate need.

“I think it would be so terrifying for Lisa’s kids to lose their mom at this stage of their lives and I want very badly to stop that. Moms love you no matter what; they tell you everything you do is great even when it’s not — and they really mean it.

“No kids should be without that because of some crazy disease. Not when there is someone, somewhere out there that can help her live...”

The “crazy disease” Lisa Gershowitz Flynn has is acute myelogenous leukemia. Six weeks of intensive chemotherapy didn’t put her into full remission, so her survival depends on a marrow or stem cell transplant, which requires a donor match.

Molly Goldstein is daughter of Alan Goldstein and Meryl Berger. Ms. Berger, worked with Lisa Gershowitz Flynn at Ipreo Holdings, a software company in Manhattan.

It was said that Ms. Flynn’s chances of finding a match were best among Jews of East European descent — which made Molly Goldstein think of the population at Temple Shearith Israel, where her family worships.

“Molly said ‘Why can’t we have a drive here?’ ” her mother said.

She’s organizing the March 30 blood drive with assistance from family, friends, the temple, and a German-based bone marrow donor organization called DKMS (Deutsche Knochenmarkspenderdatel or German Bone Marrow Donor Center).

Ms. Flynn’s situation got quite a bit of publicity — the New York Post, People Magazine — and dozens of donor drives were organized.

A potential match was found for Ms. Flynn, and she is now expected to have the transplant she needs.

140,000 a year

The donor drive is going ahead because Ms. Flynn isn’t the only person in need of a transplant.

According to DKMS Americas, 140,000 people a year diagnosed with leukemia, lymphoma and other blood cancers.

Leukemia is the most common fatal disease among children in the U.S., and a marrow transplant may offer their only chance to live.

Of every 10 patients in need, only two will receive the transplant that could save their lives.

To become potential marrow or blood stem cell donors, people must be between the ages

of 18 and 55 and in general good health.

A painless collection of cells from the cheek with a cotton-tipped swab, and a few forms filled out, is all that's needed to be entered into the National Marrow Donor Program registry.

The registry is searched by doctors looking for a match for patients in need of donors.

If a match is made, 80% of donors are asked to give peripheral blood stem cells, and 20% are asked to donate marrow tissue.

Both forms of donation are out-patient procedures.

For information about the donor drive, contact Molly at mberger119@comcast.net.

Potential donors may also contact Alina at DKMS at (866)-340-3567 or Alina@dkmsamericas.org.

It costs \$65 for DKMS to test each donor, so monetary contributions are always welcomed. They may be made at www.dkmsamericas.org.