

Sharing The Same DNA: Survivor Meets His Donor

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(WCCO) Montrose, Minn. In 2004, Patrick Jennings of Tacoma, Washington found out he had Leukemia.

"They told me I only had a thirty percent chance of finding a match," said Jennings.

A bone marrow transplant was his only hope of survival and Brian Wurtzel of Montrose, Minn. was a perfect match.

"They told me you could be a hero by saving someones life by donating stem cells," said Wurtzel.



On Tuesday night, Jennings and Wurtzel met for the first time two years after Wurtzel donated his bone marrow to Jennings.

When Wurtzel got the call that said he was potentially a perfect donor he couldn't remember ever having signed up to be a donate. The donor registry reminded Wurtzel of a 1998 blood donation he made in North Carolina.

"I was probably a little tipsy the night before and then the day it happened I had my blood drawn and didn't even know it happened," said Wurtzel.

He said he never considered not giving.

"They draw blood out of one arm its goes through a filtration machine and that catches the stem cells," said Wurtzel.

Two years after the donation, Jennings cancer is in remission. So Jennings and his wife Alicia came to Minnesota to meet Wurtzel, his wife and family.

"How many times can you say thank you to a guy who gave you the gift of life," said Jennings.

Because of the procedure they are now blood relatives forever, meaning they have the same DNA in their blood.

They both say stories like theirs are why everyone should sign up to be a donor.