



18 September 2007

How doing so little can mean so much

The opportunity to save a life comes to Bristol on Saturday 22 September. The Yvette Gate Bone Marrow Campaign have organised a bone marrow registration session with The Anthony Nolan Trust. This will take place at The Mall Galleries shopping centre in Broadmead, in the Calendar Club unit next to Woolworths on the ground floor and will be open for registration from 11am – 4pm.

The Yvette Gate Bone Marrow Campaign have been working to raise awareness about bone marrow related issues in and around Bristol for over two years now. Originally founded by Mary and David Gate in 2005 as a response to being told that their daughter Yvette needed a bone marrow transplant, the Campaign is now a registered charity. Although the work of the Campaign has found several bone marrow donors, a donor has not yet been found for Yvette.

They campaign relentlessly to raise awareness about how easy it can be to save a life, and set up bone marrow registration clinics and encourage people to join the worldwide bone marrow register. Mary and David celebrate their thirteenth wedding anniversary on 22 September and are asking people to reach out and give somebody the gift of life.

To join the Anthony Nolan Bone Marrow Register you must be aged 18 – 40 and in good health. You must be willing to donate bone marrow / stem cells in the future if you are found to have a similar or matching tissue type to a patient in need.

Registration involves filling in a registration form and medical questionnaire, checking it through with a member of the Anthony Nolan staff and then giving a small 4ml blood sample (about a teaspoon). You will only be asked to donate bone marrow at a later date if you are found to be a tissue type match to a patient that needs a lifesaving transplant.

Bristol student Jenny Dawes recently donated bone marrow and said “It’s great that doing so little can mean so much for someone else.”

And how much a bone marrow donor means was emphasised recently in the case of 7 month old Lana Leeson from Oundle in Northamptonshire. Lana became ill when she was just 6 weeks old and

initially it was thought that she had a cold or flu. However 3 weeks and 6 GP visits later Lana weighed less than her birth weight and was pale and lethargic.

She was admitted to Addenbrookes Hospital Cambridge and over the next seven weeks endured many tests and had to have transfusions of both blood and platelets. Eventually her parents were told that doctors were 80% sure that she had hemophagocytic lymphohistiocytosis (HLH) but if they waited for the last test results to come back then she would probably not survive so they started the treatment for HLH. This included chemotherapy, steroids and immunotherapy but a bone marrow transplant would also be required. A bone marrow transplant represented Lana's only chance of survival.

Lana's brother Ben was tested and her family were sure that he would be a match and be able to be her donor. But he was not and they had to look for an unrelated donor on the bone marrow register. Less than 30% of bone marrow donors actually come from within the family and most rely on the bone marrow register to find a matching donor.

Thankfully, after a two month wait a donor was found for Lana. Her family were overjoyed with the news, but because of medical confidentiality all that they know about the donor is that they are from the UK.

Lana's mother Vanessa says "Joining the register is such a simple process. And if you then become a donor it's a day of your life and you will be saving someone else's life. There are not many opportunities to be a true lifesaver these days but that is what you are. We are eternally grateful to Lana's donor – they are a true hero."

Doing so little – joining the register, being a donor; can mean so much – saving someone's life.

Full details of the event are available on the Yvette Gate Bone Marrow Campaign website www.yvettegate.co.uk, or by contacting David Gate on 0117 9093760 or 07768 257292. You can also download the Anthony Nolan information booklet and registration forms from the website. Filling in the registration form in advance can save a great deal of time on the day of the clinic.

Notes for Editors:

Further information from:

David Gate, Campaign Director, on 0117 9093760 (office); Mobile 07768 257292

Registration Information

Volunteers are invited to join the Anthony Nolan Trust Bone Marrow Register. You must be between 18 and 40 years of age, in good health and weigh over 8 stone and not be medically obese. You must also be prepared to donate to anyone that may need a bone marrow transplant if you are found to be a suitable match to that patient. There is a particular need for more potential donors who are young, male or from minority ethnic backgrounds.

It is important that people realise that joining the Bone Marrow Register is a serious commitment. Now or in the future someone's life could depend on you and committed donors save lives.

At the clinic volunteers will be asked to complete a registration form and medical questionnaire.

There will then be a discussion with a trained counsellor and the form will be checked.

Finally a small 4ml blood sample (about a teaspoon) is then taken by a qualified nurse. Bone marrow is not taken.

Someone will only be asked to donate bone marrow at a later date if they are found to be a match to a patient needing a life saving transplant. But this would only follow more testing and counselling.

If you are not found to be a match then your tissue type information will be stored on the Anthony Nolan Trust Bone Marrow Register.

Yvette Gate Bone Marrow Campaign

The Yvette Gate Bone Marrow Campaign is a Bristol based independent registered charity and is funded entirely by voluntary donations. They work to raise awareness about bone marrow related illness, bone marrow registration and donation, and to recruit new potential donors onto the worldwide bone marrow register.

The Campaign was founded by the parents of Yvette Gate from Bedminster in 2005 in response to being told that she needed a bone marrow transplant. Yvette has aplastic anaemia (bone marrow failure) and two years on a donor still cannot be found for her.

They have helped organise bone marrow registration drives in Bristol and directly recruited several hundred new potential donors onto the bone marrow register.