

Rock River Valley Blood Center Announces
National Marrow Donor Month

November is National Marrow Awareness Month, and the Rock River Valley Blood Center's Be The Match® Marrow Program is encouraging people to help save lives by registering to be a potential marrow cell donor, or raising or donating money to support adding more potential heroes to the Be The Match Marrow® Registry.

In 2009, more than 12,000 men, women, and children searched the Be The Match registry operated by the National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP) for a life-saving donor. These patients have leukemia, anemia, myelodysplastic disorders, lymphoma and many other life-threatening diseases that can be treated or cured by a marrow or cord blood transplant. Seventy percent of these patients will not have a match in their family and must rely on an unrelated donor to offer them this precious gift of life. The fact is, last year only 4 out of every 10 patients needing a transplant received one. That's why help is critical.

For a successful transplant, a marrow donor's tissue type needs to match the patient's. Finding a compatible donor is always a challenge. Because "tissue type" is inherited, the best potential donor most likely comes from the patient's same racial and ethnic group. Donors of all backgrounds are needed, but the need for diverse donors is urgent, as these groups are underrepresented on the registry, making it difficult for diverse patients to receive the health care treatment medical technology has made possible.

The registry is made up of volunteer potential donors, standing by in the event they match a searching patient, ready to give someone a second chance at life. This is a serious commitment, as searching patients are counting on members to follow through if they match and are able to donate.

STEPS TO JOIN

- **Visit any Rock River Valley Blood Center or mobile drive**
- **Complete a registration form**
- **Give a swab of cheek cells with a sterile Q-tip**

For information on how to become a donor, set up a donor registry drive, make a tax-deductible charitable contribution to help add more area residents to the registry, or learn more about the Rock River Valley Blood Center's Marrow Donor Program, please call 1-815-961-2341, e-mail mshannon@rrvbc.org or visit online at www.rrvbc.org and click on "Marrow Program".

The Rock River Valley Blood Center established its marrow donor program in 1990 and proudly serves as both a Donor Center and Apheresis Center. We recruit and manage donors, facilitate the collection and transport of marrow cells, and collect peripheral blood stem cells at our 6th Street facility. We serve the communities in northern Illinois, southern Wisconsin and beyond, reaching out to provide education, support, donor drives, registration, search activities, collection and follow-up.

The Rock River Valley Blood Center serves as a centralized, community blood center and is the sole provider of blood products and services to Beloit Memorial Hospital, Edgerton Hospital and Health Services, FHN, Mercy Harvard Hospital, OSF Saint Anthony Medical Center, Rochelle Community Hospital, Rockford Health System, SwedishAmerican Health System and SwedishAmerican Medical Center—Belvidere. For more information or to make an appointment to donate blood, please call toll free 877-RRVBC-99 or find RRVBC on the web at www.rrvbc.org.