
Samiah's Story

Diagnosed with a rare type of aplastic anemia 2 years ago, Samiah is a beautiful 13 year old with a very good sense of humor. Vibrant and intelligent is the only way to describe this unique young lady. Samiah will go to the 8th grade in the fall where she is an Honor Roll student with all A's and a Citizenship student. Among Samiah's interests are music, as she plays the piano, poetry, and shopping. "I'm bored," is one of Samiah's favorite things to say which is classic for most teenagers.

Every life counts and we all have the power to create a miracle. Please consider registering with the National Marrow Donor Program to become a potential marrow donor.

Amina and Razaali Razak

Samiah's school essay about the importance of South Asians to register:

One of the problems in the South Asian community is the urgent need for bone marrow transplant donors.

There has been major scientific advancement in the field of tissue transplantation in recent years. This has been made possible because of the creation of specialized treatment centers. The survivor rate for post transplant patients has increased significantly.

The transplantation is not based on blood type, but rather on HLA (Human Leukocyte Antigens). Because there are thousands of possible HLA combinations, it is often hard to find a matching donor. The chance of finding a match is best found in one's own ethnic group.

There are over eleven million donors in the International Bone Marrow Registry, but less than two percent are all minorities combined. Part of the reason for this is the lack of awareness in the South Asian and other minority communities. Every single day, more than six thousand patients are waiting for a donor match.

One of the obstacles in the past has been hesitation on the part of some potential donors from the fear of pain of bone marrow aspiration. In truth, in more than eighty-five percent cases bone marrow puncture is unnecessary. This is because transplantation is performed with peripheral stem cells. These stem cells are collected from a vein in the donor's arm. The development of new equipment has made this possible. This procedure is very safe for the donor and requires only a few hours.

This is significant to me because I have a blood disorder. In the future I might need a bone marrow transplant. My family and I are searching for a donor. Through our campaign we have gotten several hundred people to register as donors. Some of the donors have matched others, and have already donated.

More people need to learn about becoming donors, and we can help spread awareness.