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CALIFORNIA MOM MEETS HEROIC STRANGER WHO DONATED MARROW TO SAVE HER LIFE

Gift of Life Marrow Registry Facilitates Heartwarming Introduction

LOS ANGELES, CA (MAY 2, 2024) – Kristi Beckley, a Sacramento wife and mom who survived blood cancer was grateful that a marrow transplant from a stranger had given her a second chance to live and watch her daughters grow. Recently, she was overjoyed at the opportunity to meet the heroic young woman, Avery Barth, and thank her in person. The emotional introduction took place on May 1 during a private event in Los Angeles and was facilitated by the Gift of Life Marrow Registry.

Beckley, 48, is an attorney who works with the state’s CalRecycle office to protect California’s environment and climate for future generations. In 2021, amid her efforts to serve others, she found herself in desperate need of a marrow transplant. Diagnosed with Myelodysplastic Disorder, a blood disorder that disrupts the production of blood cells, Beckley and her doctors began the urgent search for a marrow donor when no one in her family was a match. Months later, a donor was found in the Gift of Life Marrow Registry.

“The day of my transplant was probably the most emotional day of my life,” said Beckley. “The new bone marrow did not arrive until late at night, and I remember sitting up in my hospital bed praying the rosary for both me and my donor.”

Beckley underwent the transplant and began the slow process of recovery - a journey that included more than 100 days separated from her young children. Throughout it all, she felt a profound gratitude toward her then-anonymous donor, describing Barth as “an angel and a gift from God.”

Barth, a 28-year-old residing in Santa Monica, joined Gift of Life’s registry in 2016 while a student at the University of Southern California. Upon receiving the call that she was a match, Barth flew to New Jersey for the donation procedure, which took place at Hackensack University Medical Center.

“It [was] a big decision, but also very rewarding,” said Barth. “I would say it’s important to treat others the way you would like to be treated. If you were in the position where you needed a donor, you would want someone to donate.”

“This experience showed me the best of human nature,” added Beckley. “It brought out the best in me, in my friends and family, my neighbors, acquaintances, and people I have never met before, including those responsible for saving my life: doctors, nurses and ultimately my donor.”

Due to U.S. medical privacy laws, donors and recipients have to wait at least one year before learning the identity of their matches. Donor-recipient reunions are the highlight of Gift of Life’s myriad events, which are designed to educate guests on the organization’s mission to increase the number of potential donors and give patients battling diseases like leukemia, lymphoma, and sickle cell anemia a second chance at life.

Photos and video of the event are available upon request.

About Gift of Life Marrow Registry

Gift of Life Marrow Registry is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization headquartered in Boca Raton, Fla. The organization, established in 1991, is dedicated to saving lives by facilitating blood stem cell and bone marrow transplants for patients with leukemia, lymphoma, and other blood-related diseases. The registry houses its own state-of-the-art stem cell collection center, biobank, and laboratory. To learn more about Gift of Life Marrow Registry, visit www.giftoflife.org.