



# Gift of Life Media Fact Sheet

## ABOUT GIFT OF LIFE MARROW REGISTRY

Gift of Life Marrow Registry is a public bone marrow registry in the United States, founded in 1991 by Jay Feinberg, a marrow transplant recipient and leukemia survivor. The organization is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, and is an accredited member of the World Marrow Donor Association and an associate registry of the National Donor Marrow Program. Headquarters are located in Boca Raton, Fla., with field staff in New York, Boston, and Washington, D.C.

## HISTORY

When he was 22 years old, Feinberg was diagnosed with leukemia. On learning that finding a match would be extremely difficult, he was advised to prepare his bucket list and do what he could with his remaining time. Jay was of Eastern European descent and at that time, the registry was not diverse and potential matching donors from that background were not prevalent. Unwilling to accept this advice, Jay and his family launched a four-year, international search for a matching donor, registering over 60,000 people and finding dozens of matches for many other cancer patients – but not Jay. As his time was running out, one final drive was held, and the last person tested that day turned out to be Jay’s perfect match. The lengthy struggle to find a donor inspired Jay and his family to pay it forward and start the Gift of Life Marrow Registry.

Today, the organization continues its mission to cure patients suffering from blood cancer, with over 260,000 donors in the registry, and over 3,000 lifesaving transplants accomplished. Donors who join the Gift of Life registry become part of the national registry database in the United States, and the international registry database serving over 52 countries. Donors can be searched by transplant centers and physicians around the world.

Gift of Life is known for the excellent support it provides to donors, with an annual check-in call and full support from a dedicated coordinator during the donation process.

## ABOUT TRANSPLANTATION

Transplantation involves either bone marrow collected from the iliac crest of the hip bone while under anesthesia or peripheral blood stem cells (PBSC) collected through apheresis, a process similar to donating platelets. The donor’s bone marrow or stem cells will naturally return to pre-donation levels. Approximately 85 percent of today’s transplants are PBSC, and only 15 percent bone marrow, which is often requested for children. The goal of transplantation is to fully replace the patient’s bone marrow and immune system with healthy hematopoietic stem cells. These will form new, healthy bone marrow that generates a new immune system, free from the conditions that caused the need.

## CONDITIONS TREATED BY TRANSPLANTS

Bone marrow and blood stem cell transplants may be used to treat or cure many blood cancers such as leukemia and lymphoma, as well as diseases of the bone marrow and inherited immune disorders.

Gift of Life is happy to provide additional information, statistics about bone marrow and peripheral stem cell donation, and images, quotes and interviews.



**HOW TO JOIN THE REGISTRY**

Every person has the potential to save the life of someone with blood cancer. Joining is simple - it only takes two minutes and no blood is drawn. Donors should be 18 to 45 years old, in general good health, and U.S. citizens.

New donors swab the inside of their cheeks and complete a registration questionnaire. The swabs are tested by a lab for genetic markers, which are entered in the registry where they can be searched to find matches for patients in dire need of a transplant.

To join the registry, order a testing and registration kit online at [www.giftoflife.org/register](http://www.giftoflife.org/register) or join in person by visiting a donor drive. For a calendar of upcoming drives and their locations visit [giftoflife.org/events](http://giftoflife.org/events).

Only U.S. citizens 18 and older may join the Gift of Life Marrow Registry. Citizens of other countries can contact their local bone marrow registry to volunteer as donors.



### STATISTICS

- Blood cancer is diagnosed in a child or adult every 4 minutes in the United States, affecting 170,000 people per year
- Each year approximately 20,000 people in the United States need a stem cell transplant (marrow, blood stem cells or cord blood)
- the lifetime probability of an American receiving a marrow, stem cell or cord blood transplant from a related or unrelated donor is one in 200. One in 400 will receive that transplant from the unrelated donor pool
- Only 30% of matches are found within the family; 70% of donors are strangers found on the registry
- Matching factors are inherited, so donors and recipients are usually from a similar ethnic ancestry
- New cases of leukemia, lymphoma and myeloma are expected to account for more than 10% of the estimated 1,685,210 new cancer cases diagnosed in the United States

### GIFT OF LIFE AT A GLANCE

- 3,000+ transplants facilitated
- More than 260,000 registered donors
- Over 13,500 matches found
- Over 10,000 donor recruitment drives held
- Only bone marrow registry founded and headed by a transplant recipient, Jay Feinberg
- Accredited member of World Marrow Donor Association, serving 52 countries
- Headquartered in Boca Raton, Fla. with staff in New York City, Washington, D.C. and Boston, Mass.
- Campus Ambassadors at more than 85 universities in the United States and Israel
- Registered 501(c)(3), nonprofit organization. Gift of Life receives no government funding and relies on charitable contributions to further its lifesaving mission
- The cost to add a new donor to the registry is \$60. Donors are not paid, nor do they incur a cost for donating

### OTHER WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

**Volunteer:** Gift of Life has a highly active and friendly community of volunteers across the United States, who help in many ways, including staffing donor recruitment drives, 5Ks and fundraising drives, organizing community events, and other opportunities. Contact Gift of Life's Volunteer Coordinator, 561-982-2900.

**Contribute:** Gift of Life receives no government funding. Contributions help add new donors to the registry and support Gift of Life's mission: finding a donor for every patient in need, whenever and wherever it is needed. Help us get everyone involved, –swabbed and cured! Visit [giftoflife.org/contrib](https://giftoflife.org/contrib).



**HELP  
US  
GET  
EVERYONE  
INVOLVED  
SWABBED  
CURED**

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

Gift of Life Marrow Registry  
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Boca Raton, FL 33431

**Toll-free:** 800-9MARROW

**Main:** 561-982-2900

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