



## News Release

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Save a Life and Pay for College – Be The Match Offers Education Grants for Donors** *Donor Registry Hoping to Advance Cure for Bone Cancer*

**MINNEAPOLIS – Oct. 1, 2018** – While saving a life is priceless, Be The Match, the world’s largest and most diverse donor registry, is introducing a program to offer educational grants to those who successfully complete the process of bone marrow donation. The cure for blood cancers like leukemia is within, and Be The Match aims to grow the registry and close the gap between patients and donors.

The privately funded educational grants will be offered to those who successfully complete the donation process, and will range from \$2,500 - \$10,000. College-aged donors make the most viable candidates for bone marrow donation in particular, and the organization sees this initiative as a way to give back to those who give the gift of life.

Racial inequality exists in bone marrow donation, but is something a diverse registry can solve. While a person of European ancestry has a 97% chance of finding their genetic match through the registry, a person of African descent only has a 66% chance. Those representing an ethnic group of critical need will be offered scholarships of higher value.

Scientific advancements made to bone marrow and tissue donation give donors the ability to painlessly save a life without lasting consequence. Unlike donating a partial organ, the human body regenerates whatever bone marrow has been donated within a matter of weeks. In most cases, people are back to their regular routine the next day after bone marrow donation.

Currently, less than 1% of those who join the registry as donors are successfully matched and contacted to go through with the donation process. If matched, either Be The Match or the patient's insurance will cover the complete cost—from travel to medical expenses. Donors never pay to donate marrow. This has been the organization's ongoing mission for over thirty years.

"When I was in college, I joined the registry through a drive Be The Match held on my campus. A year after graduation, I was matched with a little boy who had been through hell with his leukemia diagnosis," said past donor John Verinois. "I was flown to California, my bone marrow was harvested, and I was back to normal a few days later. It's the best decision I've ever made, and I'm very glad to see the organization making this commitment to future donors. I hope that no child has to suffer any longer while they wait for a cure."

"Be The Match has been offering financial assistance to patients navigating the transplantation process for over 20 years. This new educational grant for donors will expand the current financial service offerings within our network. We urge those who can't become marrow donors to instead become financial donors," said Be The Match Chief Executive Officer C. Randal Mills.

### **About Be The Match**

For people with life-threatening blood cancers—like leukemia and lymphoma—or other diseases, a cure exists. Be The Match connects patients with their donor match for a life-saving marrow or umbilical cord blood transplant. People can contribute to the cure as a member of the Be The Match Registry®, financial contributor or volunteer. Be The Match provides patients and their families one-on-one support, education, and guidance before, during and after transplant.

Be The Match is operated by the National Marrow Donor Program® (NMDP), a nonprofit organization that matches patients with donors, educates health care professionals and conducts research so more lives can be saved. To learn more about the cure, visit [BeTheMatch.org](http://BeTheMatch.org) or call 1 (800) MARROW-2.