

Special Gift from a Vegetarian Mom

Written by Tai-Liang Chen

Chinese-American Patient Received Bone Marrow from a Taiwanese Mother

David is thirty-five years old, living in San Diego, California, had a bone marrow transplant four and a half years ago. He often tried to visualize a picture of a kind woman who lives on the other side of the Pacific Ocean and whom he had never met. At the age of 49, she made a noble decision which was a matter of life and death to David. After the marrow transplant, David and his wife gave birth



After receiving bone marrow, David, in good health, is able to watch their three adorable children growing up.

to a healthy twin. Now David, his wife and three children have a very happy life.

As a professional pharmacist, David has the most up-to-date medical information and understands a variety of new drugs; he knew that there was no medication that could save his life.

David, who is Chinese-American, still remembers very clearly when the doctor told him a bone marrow transplant was the only treatment option for him. The Doctor said, "There is good news and bad news. The good news is, as a Chinese-American, you have the world's largest population of potential donors to match; the bad news is, so far the proportion of Asian and minority ethnic people who have registered in the bone marrow database is extremely low. There are not enough people available for matching. So your chance to find a match is not very high."

Three Firsts Save a Family

Fortunately, David found a donor match in Taiwan and the transplant

David gave his donor Mei-Yue Cheng a big hug that she gave him a new life.



was successful. Four years later, on the moon festival, David and his donor Mei-Yue Cheng met. David said to Mei-Yue, “In most of the cases it is the recipient’s parents who thank the donor on behalf of their children, but I want to thank you as a recipient for your generosity. You give me the opportunity to witness my three children coming into this world. I am able to be a father to them and see them growing up. The gift you gave is not just one new life; it actually is four healthy new lives and an awesome family.”

The Donor Mei-Yue Cheng has been a vegetarian for thirty years and has been running a vegetarian breakfast shop for years without any break. To her family and her children she is a superwoman. Mei-Yue, a humble unpretentious lady, has been through three “first time experiences” due to her bone marrow/stem cell donation: first time to suspend her shop, first time to fly on an airplane, and first time to visit the city of Hualien. Her children came with her for their

meeting. Although she was a bit nervous, she was very happy to know that her bone marrow has saved a person’s life.

Mei-Yue smiled and kindly said that she just did the right thing, it wasn’t a big deal. But she was very happy that, because of this bone marrow donation, she had a chance to make friends with many Tzu-Chi volunteers. She has also been involved in Tzu Chi, and participated in the performance of Water Repentance Sutra. The activities were helpful to her and brought her joyfulness. It broadened her view of life. She wished the best for David’s health and his new life.

David spends a lot of time with his family. He also began to volunteer to help others. He is an active participant in bone marrow transplant advocacy in Southern California. As a successful bone marrow recipient, he emphasizes the importance of the bone marrow database and encourages the patients not to give up hope in finding a match.