

SAVING LIVES TOGETHER

Stories of Courage & Compassion



BMDP

Bone Marrow Donor
Programme

SAVING LIVES TOGETHER

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Bone Marrow Donor Programme (BMDP)

8 Sinaran Drive
#03-02, Novena Specialist Center
Singapore 307470

www.bmdp.org

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The stories in this book are based on real events and experiences shared by individuals and families. Some names and identifying details have been changed to protect the privacy of those involved.

For more information about joining the bone marrow donor registry, volunteering, or supporting BMDP, please visit our website or contact us at admin@bmdp.org.

This publication is dedicated to all the donors, patients, volunteers, and supporters who make the mission of BMDP possible. Your courage and compassion save lives every day.

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VISION

To provide hope for patients with leukaemia and blood-related diseases.

MISSION

- To build a register of Singapore bone marrow donors.
- To network and be the conduit of a global marrow database.
- To build a world class search process for transplants.
- To be an advocacy champion for donors (including their immediate families) from pre-donation to post-donation.
- To educate the public and promote further understanding of blood-related diseases.

CORE VALUES

- Commitment
- Integrity
- Respect
- Teamwork
- Excellence



FOREWORD

K. SHANMUGAM

Minister for Home Affairs and Minister for Law
MP for Nee Soon GRC
Patron, Bone Marrow Donor Programme

For over 30 years, BMDP has operated the only marrow donor registry in Singapore. It has helped to find successful matches for over 800 patients, and built up a registry of more than 120,000 marrow donors.

This is essential, life-saving work.

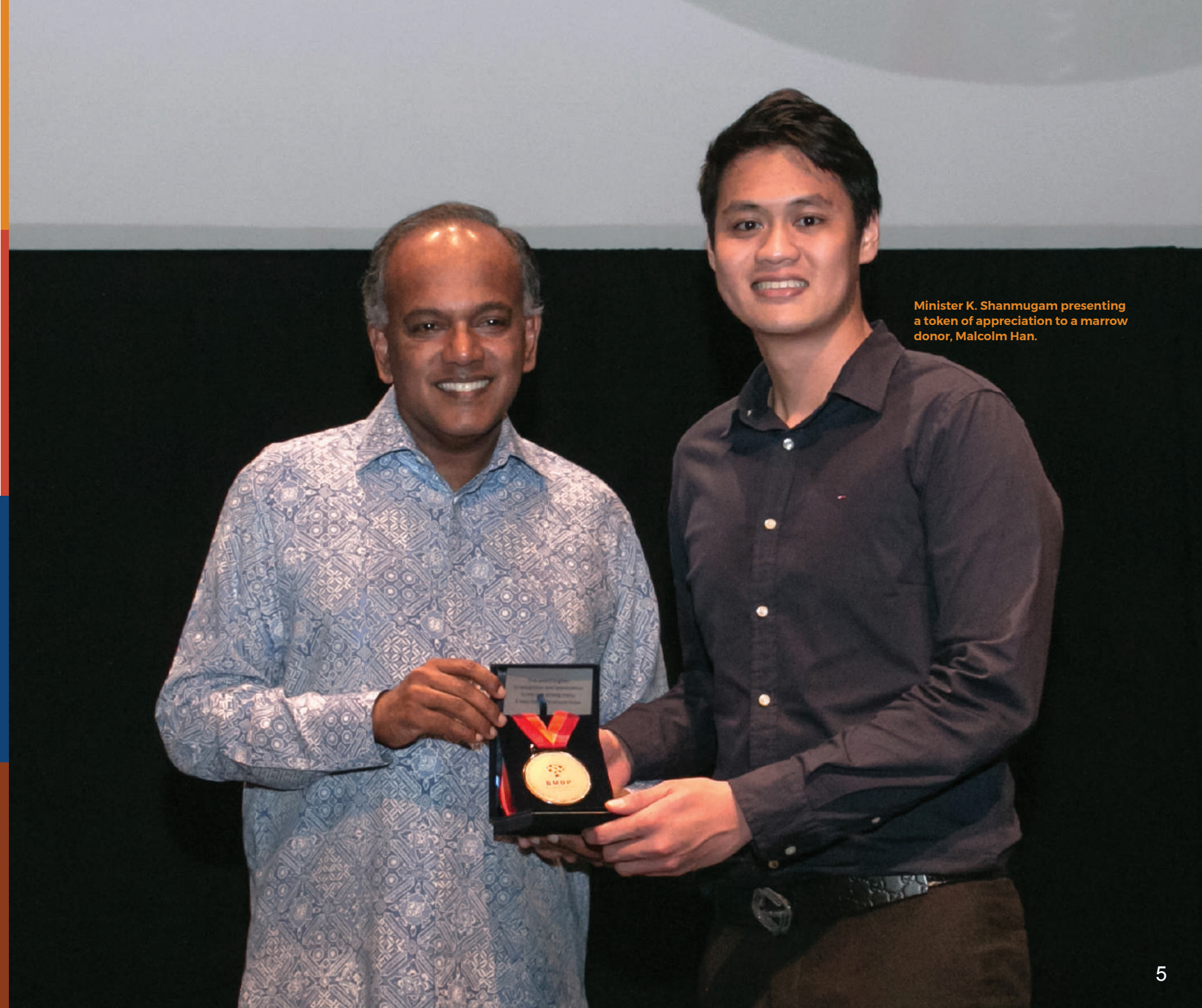
Every day, around 6 Singaporeans are diagnosed with a blood-related disease. Their chances of survival often depend on a bone marrow transplant.

We can all play our part, to help increase those chances. Support BMDP in its mission to build its donor register. Be a lifeline for others. Encourage those around you to do the same. There is nothing special required to become a donor. All it takes is a moment of our time. And a willing heart.

In this book, hear directly from the people who are at the centre of BMDP's efforts. Donors, who step forward in courage, compassion, and selflessness. Patients, who are a testament of strength and hope, and remind us of the precious gift of life. The countless staff, supporters, and volunteers, who form the backbone of the organisation.

These stories reflect the best of the human spirit. Ordinary people, coming together, doing their part, and helping to make extraordinary things possible.

I hope these experiences inspire you. And I look forward to seeing more people come forward, to help BMDP do more.



Minister K. Shanmugam presenting a token of appreciation to a marrow donor, Malcolm Han.

ABHIJIT RAHA

President, Bone Marrow Donor Programme

“Saving Lives Together” has been the guiding principle that has driven our mission and unified our diverse community as we endeavor to grow our registry.

We operate within a vibrant and interconnected ecosystem where each stakeholder plays a crucial role in this life-saving journey. Marrow donors selflessly give a part of themselves to save a life. Our partners and volunteers dedicate their time and resources to support our mission, creating opportunities for donor recruitment talks and joining us at roadshows to help educate the public.

Volunteer fundraisers work tirelessly to ensure we have an additional source of financial support. Transplant and collection centers perform the critical procedures of transplant and marrow donation. Our dedicated team of full-time staff coordinates all these efforts, building the register and ensuring timely and safe delivery of the valuable blood stem cell packages to the patients.

May these stories resonate with you and inspire a deeper commitment to our cause. By understanding the challenges and triumphs within our community, we hope more of you will join us in this mission. Together, we can provide hope and a second chance at life for the patients.



CHARLES LOH

CEO, Bone Marrow Donor Programme

At BMDP, we are driven by the promise: to find a donor for every patient in need. Each day, our team strives to bring hope to those affected by blood disorders. Our journey is often filled with a mix of joy and heartache – smiles on days when we hear of successful transplants and hundreds of marrow donors registered; frantic moments when donors withdraw at the last minute; and solemn silence on days when we receive news that patients had passed on.

We are fortunate to have the unwavering support of many stakeholders. Among them are individuals like Asyraf and Ananth, marrow donors who were willing to proceed despite reservations from their family members. Fundraisers like Lin and Aarushi work tirelessly to help raise funds. It is people like them who give us the confidence to strengthen our Patient Subsidy Schemes and do more to alleviate the financial burdens of patients.

Passionate ambassadors like Kenneth and Saunak took time off work to join us at recruitment talks and roadshows. Partners like Marc, Kum Kit and Swee Lan supported our advocacy and awareness programmes, bringing our mission to their workplace and community of friends.

The stories in this collection are a testament to the collective effort required to give patients a second chance at life. It truly takes a village, and we are continually inspired by the generosity and commitment of everyone involved. We hope that through these stories, more will be moved to join our cause, becoming a part of the BMDP family and helping to fulfil the promise of life to more patients.



ONE

SEARCHING, MATCHING & CONNECTING LIVES

"The greatest fulfillment comes from seeing the tangible impact of our work. Through donor-recipient meetings and communications, we witness firsthand the difference we make. Each matching donor found for a patient by our team brings hope and potentially life-saving support to those in need."

Chandini Devi Selvarajah
Search and Transplant Services Manager, BMDP



The union between a marrow donor, Lua Shitian (left), and her recipient, Edith Ye (right).

STACEY LIM & STELLA CHUA

‘Sisters’ Who Share the Same Blood



At the beginning of 2009, Stacey Lim and Stella Chua lived completely separate lives, unaware of the connection the future held for them. Stacey describes herself as once being a typical “anxious working mother in the rat race”, juggling her time between taking care of her two young children and her full time job. Meanwhile, Stella was in her final year of nursing, completing her clinical attachment. She had just registered as a donor with BMDP six months prior. Little did they know, they would transform from two strangers into ‘sisters’ whose lives were tied together by blood.

Stacey’s Diagnosis

Stacey recalls experiencing abnormal breathlessness and fatigue. Though initial tests showed nothing abnormal, a colleague suggested she seek a second opinion. It was then, after a blood test, that Stacey received the devastating news: her white blood cell count was abnormally high, indicating a possible leukaemia diagnosis.

“The next day, it was confirmed that I had Acute Lymphoblastic Leukaemia. I was shocked, devastated, and felt utterly helpless,” Stacey recalls. If left untreated, she would have mere weeks to live. Stacey barely had the time to process the gravity of her situation before being swept into a whirlwind of tests, treatments, and procedures. They left her in a weak and vulnerable state, forcing her into bedridden isolation, unable to see her family or friends more than once or twice a day.

The search for a bone marrow donor began, but finding a match outside her family seemed like finding a needle in a haystack. “The chance of finding a match outside my family was 1 in 20,000,” Stacey explains. Months of uncertainty followed until a match was found, only to be dashed when the donor was deemed unfit after further medical tests. Just as hope seemed out of reach, BMDP found another match — Stella Chua.

Stella’s Decision

Stella, now a mother of two, registered as a bone marrow donor with BMDP while still a final-year nursing student. “I received the call during my clinical attachment and was really excited,” she recalls. Despite some initial concerns from relatives who were unfamiliar with the donation process, Stella was determined to proceed. “There was no reason to decline. I felt it was fated and aligned with my purpose in life to be kind and altruistic,” she says.

Stella underwent the Peripheral Blood Stem Cell (PBSC) donation method, which involved receiving injections to stimulate stem cell production followed by a non-invasive collection process. “It was similar to platelets or blood donation, with just longer hours. I remember falling asleep during the procedure,” Stella shares.

near-death experience due to a viral infection, Stacey’s body accepted the transplant, and she began her long road to recovery.

Four years later, Stacey and Stella met up with the help of BMDP. Although it was their first time meeting each other, they bonded quickly through their similar joyful personalities and positive outlooks on life. The doctor that had managed their transplant process fondly described the two of them as “sisters who share the same blood”.

Every day, Stacey continues to feel gratitude towards her donor, Stella. “I am forever indebted to her incredibly noble act of donating her bone marrow,” Stacey states in an interview. “I cannot thank Stella enough for being my hero, saving and giving me an extra lease of life.”

The Long Road to Recovery

For Stacey, the transplant brought a mix of fear and hope. “I was anxious about potential complications, but I told myself to stay strong,” she says. Despite a

“You can offer a life-giving chance to those who are at the end of the line for hope.”

Stacey Lim

Stacey (left),
Stella (right)



“The time and effort put into becoming a donor is nothing compared to the roller coaster journey the patients experience,”

Stella Chua

DANIEL TOONG & LIN JIAMING

Daniel & Jiaming's Interwoven Lives

In the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, Lin Jiaming began to experience hives and fevers. What he initially presumed was a case of COVID-19 devolved into a battle against a far more alarming diagnosis – lymphatic cancer. As treatments proved unsuccessful and his condition continued to deteriorate, Jiaming turned to BMDP as his final hope.

The Last Lifeline

Daniel Toong had never heard of BMDP until his sister Desiree, a BMDP volunteer, urged him and his fiancée to register as potential marrow donors. Inspired by his sister's volunteer work and advocacy, he was propelled to step forward, despite his immense fear of needles. Just one year later, he became the lifeline Jiaming needed.

Undeterred by his own fears and uncertainties, Daniel continued with steadfast resolve throughout the donation process. "If I don't donate, who will?" he questioned. In the days prior to donation, his fear of



Daniel (second from left), Jiaming (second from right) & family at one of BMDP's donor-recipient meet

needles was so great that he had to rely on his sister to help administer injections. This is because Daniel underwent the Peripheral Blood Stem Cell (PBSC) donation method which requires injections 5 days prior to donation to increase the blood stem cell count.

Daniel's courageous decision reminds us that even in the face of uncertainty, there is immense power

in standing up to be the hope that someone desperately needs.

A Meeting of Miracles

BMDP has organised several donor-recipient meets, and it was during one of them that Daniel and Jiaming finally met one another. What Daniel once saw as an abstract act of kindness, was solidified as a tangible impact when he witnessed Jiaming in the flesh.

As the two of them exchanged stories, Daniel learnt how his simple act of kindness had renewed Jiaming's desire to live and persevere in his battle against lymphoma. Daniel's donation had allowed Jiaming to experience things he feared he might never get the chance to.



Jiaming with his nieces and nephew

"I never thought I would be able to go on holidays with my family, enjoy my favourite food and most importantly, be able to see my nieces and nephew grow up. This is only possible because of my donor's selfless act."

Daniel and Jiaming's interwoven lives stand as a testament to the powerful impact of kindness. What may seem like an insignificant act to one person, could be momentous and life changing for another, especially in the face of adversity.

"A simple act of kindness goes a long way and is a story to tell for generations to come."

Daniel Toong

Daniel and his fiancée



SOPHIA TAN

A Second Chance At Life

Discovering the Diagnosis

In 2015, Sophia Tan was a dengue patient who participated in a study aimed at preventing future mosquito bites. This decision led to an unexpected discovery. During a routine follow-up, the hospital detected something alarming – Sophia may have leukaemia. At first, she was in disbelief. How could a former Physical Education teacher who led a healthy lifestyle be diagnosed with such a serious illness? The shock quickly turned to anger when two separate doctors gave her the same grim prognosis: she only had six months left to live. Refusing to accept this, Sophia was determined to fight. She started chemotherapy

and treatment, vowing to do whatever it takes to survive.

Finding a Lifesaving Match

The road to finding a matching donor was fraught with challenges for Sophia. After her leukaemia diagnosis, she knew that a bone marrow transplant was her best chance of survival. However, finding a suitable donor was not easy. Her sister was only a 50% match, leaving Sophia in a precarious position. Months of waiting ensued, filled with uncertainty and anxiety. During this time, Sophia endured multiple rounds of chemotherapy, each one more grueling than the last,

to keep the disease at bay while waiting for a match. When BMDP delivered the news of a matching donor, it brought a wave of relief and renewed determination. With steadfast courage, Sophia endured the harsh treatments to prepare for transplant, ultimately embracing it as her lifeline to a second chance at life.

Embracing a New Lease of Life

Post-recovery, Sophia eagerly returned to her work as a financial consultant. She also discovered a newfound passion for fishing, which brought her closer to nature and introduced her to new places and people. One of her most cherished memories was traveling to Bali after receiving the all-clear to fly. It was a significant milestone, symbolising her return to normalcy after years of isolation and treatment.

Meeting her Lifesaver

For five years, Sophia and her donor, Pauline, exchanged anonymous letters and cards. The anticipation of meeting in person grew with each correspondence. When the day finally came, Sophia was overwhelmed with gratitude and emotion. Pauline not only shared the same HLA-typing but also the same birthday! Meeting the person who saved her life was an indescribable experience, one that Sophia will forever hold dear.

A Call to Action

Reflecting on her journey, Sophia is deeply aware of the importance of bone marrow donors. The registry numbers, particularly among minority ethnic groups, are far from ideal. This shortfall means many

patients face slim chances of finding a match. It is heart-breaking to think of lives lost due to this gap. Sophia urges everyone to consider registering as a potential donor. A single “Yes” from a donor not only extends a life but also allows that person to continue being with their loved ones and community. Sophia’s second chance at life has enabled her to continue doing good and enriching the lives of those around her.

Sophia Today

Today, Sophia plays an integral role in BMDP’s Patient Advocacy Team. Driven by a passion to make a difference, she shares her story to provide hope and comfort to those in similar situations. Whether packing care packages or participating in recruitment drives, Sophia brings dedication and warmth to every task. Her efforts help create a supportive community, uplifting both patients and volunteers. Sophia is grateful for the opportunity to give back and inspire others to join this life-saving cause.



MIRANTI ADRIANI

How a Stranger's Bone Marrow Saved Miranti's Life

Diagnosis and Desperation

In September 2014, while working in Indonesia, Miranti Adriani noticed concerning symptoms starting with swollen legs and gums, progressing to a point where she couldn't eat, chew, or even function normally due to extreme fatigue. Local doctors were baffled, prompting her to seek help at the National University Hospital (NUH) in Singapore. There, Miranti was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukaemia – a rapidly progressing cancer that had already infiltrated 90% of her blood cells.

The diagnosis was devastating. At just 34 years old, Miranti faced a grim survival rate of 27% for adults over 20 with this condition. "I was miserable; I cried the whole day," she recalls. "I didn't know if I would live and the future felt so uncertain." However, her

doctors provided a glimmer of hope, directing her to BMDP – Singapore's only register of volunteer bone marrow donors.

The Search for a Match

Bone marrow transplants are critical in treating over 60 potentially fatal diseases, including various types of leukaemia. For Miranti, finding a matching donor was crucial. She provided a tissue sample, which was compared against potential donors for Human Leukocyte Antigens (HLA) compatibility. While she waited for a match, Miranti endured intense chemotherapy, battling nausea, mood swings, high fevers, hair loss, and constant weakness. "I had all the symptoms somebody would have from chemo," she describes. "On top of that, I constantly worried about surviving."

The Lifesaving Call

In December 2014, just four months after her diagnosis, Miranti received the news she had been waiting for – BMDP had found a potential donor. Although the HLA markers weren't a full match, it was close enough to offer hope. Miranti bravely accepted the risks, eager for a chance at a normal life.

The bone marrow transplant was a quick procedure, lasting under an hour. Post-transplant, Miranti spent another month under medical observation to ensure her body accepted the new cells. Fortunately, she exhibited no signs of rejection, and her recovery progressed smoothly.

Meeting her Hero

The emotional culmination of Miranti's journey came when she met her donor, facilitated by BMDP. "It was a very emotional moment for me," she says. "I couldn't thank him enough. If it wasn't for him, I wouldn't be here today." Her donor's simple yet profound response, "Looking at you today, I know all the effort was worth it," encapsulated the essence of their lifesaving bond.

A Call to Action

Today, Miranti lives in Singapore, working in a healthcare company and cherishing every moment of her second chance at life. She often thinks of those still fighting their battles and hopes more people will register as bone marrow donors, particularly from minority groups like the Malay and Indian communities, which are underrepresented in the donor registry. "Imagine if this was happening to someone you love," Miranti urges. "You can save somebody's life. Isn't that so rewarding?" Her story reminds us that we can all be heroes and lifesavers in our own right.

Registering as a bone marrow donor could be the simple, selfless act that gives someone else a second chance at life.

"I am very proud of Miranti whose courage and trust in us has enabled her to choose a difficult therapy which offered the only chance in her fight against a life-threatening disease. Most importantly, her great fortitude and positive attitude continues to serve as a motivation to the other transplant patients going through the same ordeal. As a transplant physician, I feel fulfilled and grateful to be part of her treatment journey. The greatest reward for me is to see her reintegrated into her personal, social, and professional life, free of the disease and its complications."

Dr Koh Liang Piu, Miranti's Transplant Physician



Miranti and
Dr Koh Liang Piu

YEO SER SEN JASON

Finding Faith Amidst Hardship

Jason's Battle Against Cancer

Yeo Ser Sen Jason had envisioned a year of success and happiness – he was happily married, he had just secured a new position in his career, and things were looking bright. But a few months into his job, symptoms of fatigue, weight loss, and intermittent fevers began to creep in. Initially, he attributed these symptoms to work stress, believing that a bit of rest and relaxation would be the perfect remedy.

Facing A Harsh Reality

However, just a few days into a vacation in China, he unexpectedly fell into a critical condition and a series of tests led him to be diagnosed with myelodysplastic syndrome – a type of disorder when blood cells are poorly formed and don't work properly. Initially in denial, shocked and scared by the severity of his condition, he admitted that he “ran away” from his diagnosis, avoiding recommendations from his doctor.

How could this cruel twist of fate befall him when he was just reaching the pinnacle of success? Jason struggled to come to terms with this harsh reality before eventually accepting treatment.

Acceptance, however, was only the beginning. Jason embarked on a grueling regimen of chemotherapy, enduring its relentless side effects for a year. The treatment was harsh, often leaving him physically drained and emotionally exhausted. Despite his best efforts, the chemotherapy only managed to keep his illness marginally under control. His spirits began to falter, and the prospect of a bone marrow transplant loomed as his only hope for survival.

Holding onto Hope

As Jason's condition continued to deteriorate, the search for a donor became a race against time. The process was painstakingly slow, with several potential donors proving uncontactable and three more deemed unfit after further testing. Each rejection felt like a devastating blow, chipping away at his hope and resilience. Yet just as his hope began to waver, the perfect match was finally found.

However, just six months post-transplant, some cancer cells re-emerged, necessitating a second transplant. Dismayed and discouraged, Jason felt like the battle was never-ending.

During this challenging period, Jason found solace in the friendships he formed with other transplant patients. Their shared experiences and stories reminded him that he was not alone during times of difficulty and uncertainty. These bonds became a crucial support system, offering encouragement and understanding in ways that only those who had walked a similar path could provide.

“Be patient, have a fighting spirit, never stop believing... The road is long but no one is alone.”

Jason's journey serves as a testament for the boundless resilience and unwavering courage of patients across the world, lighting up a path for others to find strength amidst their own battles.



Jason & his wife

KELLY CHEONG

A Pillar of Strength for Patients



Kelly at work

“It brings me much joy to witness the improvement in people’s wellbeing, especially those who are vulnerable and marginalised.”

As a Senior Medical Social Worker, Kelly Cheong’s job is multi-faceted and holistic. She conducts psychosocial assessments to evaluate patients’ support systems, coping abilities, financial resources, and overall readiness for treatment. “Assisting transplant patients involves educating them and their families about the

transplant process, recovery, potential complications, and necessary lifestyle changes,” Kelly explains. She also provides emotional support and counseling throughout the treatment process, helping patients and families navigate extended hospitalisations and anxieties over treatment outcomes.

Collaboration with BMDP and Healthcare Professionals

Kelly collaborates closely with BMDP to deliver comprehensive care. This involves coordinating with physicians, nurses, dietitians and therapists to meet all of the patients’ needs as well as working with BMDP to help patients access funding options. “We act as a liaison between the patient and the multi-disciplinary healthcare team,” Kelly says. She also connects patients with support groups for emotional encouragement and coordinates community resources for a smooth transition from hospital to home settings.

Kelly’s dedication to her patients goes beyond her professional duties and her story is a testament to the profound impact dedicated healthcare professionals can have on the lives of those they serve.

“I would like to extend my gratitude for BMDP’s unwavering support and commitment towards creating a positive impact in the lives of patients in need. I would like to share a personal anecdote to illustrate just how significant BMDP’s assistance has been.

Once, the financial burden of medical expenses weighed heavily on one of my patients when she learnt about her Haplo-2017 transplant admission cost. We worked swiftly to seek assistance from BMDP and within 3 working days, my patient and her family received the happy news of their successful application. Thank you BMDP!” - Kelly Cheong

KATHLEEN CHEUNG

The Heart of Healing: A Medical Social Worker’s Role in Transplant Care

As a Medical Social Worker (MSW), Kathleen Cheung’s primary responsibility is to support transplant patients throughout their journey. This involves assessing their readiness for transplant, ensuring compliance with treatment plans, and addressing any concerns they might have. Her work is vital in preparing patients both mentally and emotionally for the road ahead.

Inspired to Make a Difference

Kathleen’s passion for social work, particularly in the healthcare field, stems from a deep desire to help others during their most vulnerable moments. “Patients are struck by an illness at the least expected moments, and they are usually overwhelmed when this happens. Support at this point in time is crucial, and I want to be that someone who can make a difference in their journey towards recovery,” she shares.

Navigating Common Challenges

Financial concerns often top the list of challenges for transplant patients. “Common financial concerns include coping with high medical costs, managing daily expenses, and covering treatment-related costs like transport,” Kathleen notes. She helps patients apply for financial assistance from government agencies and charity organisations like BMDP.



Kathleen (in white top) with her colleagues

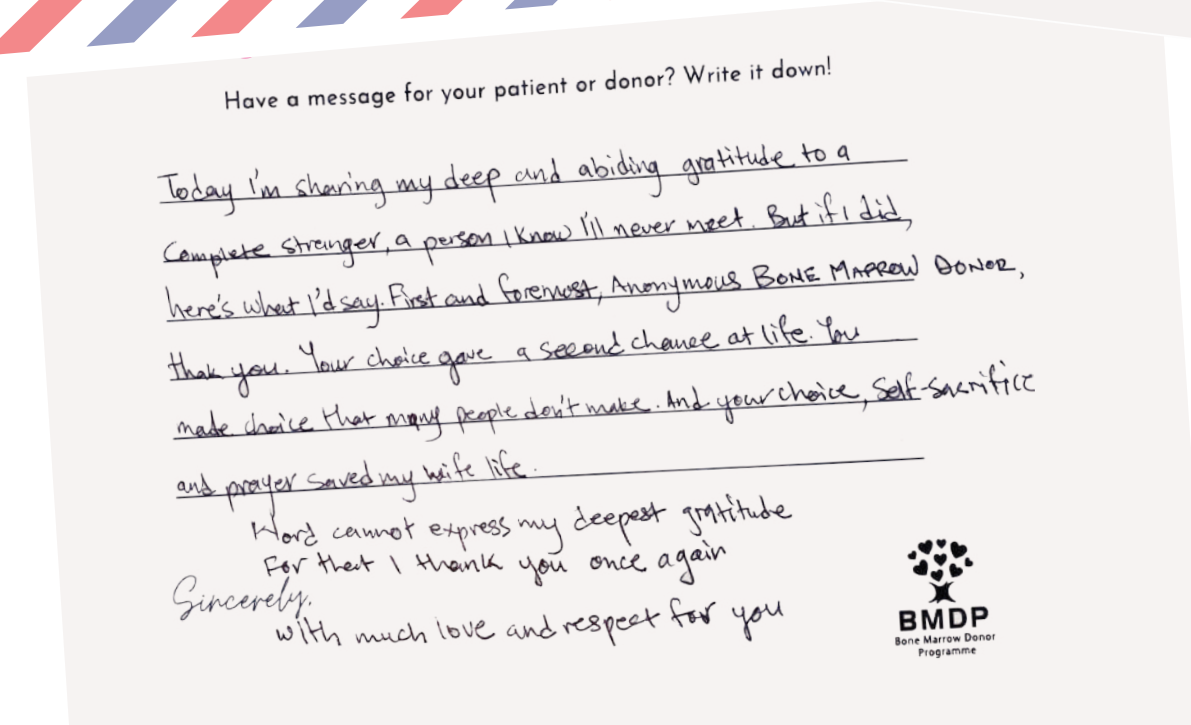
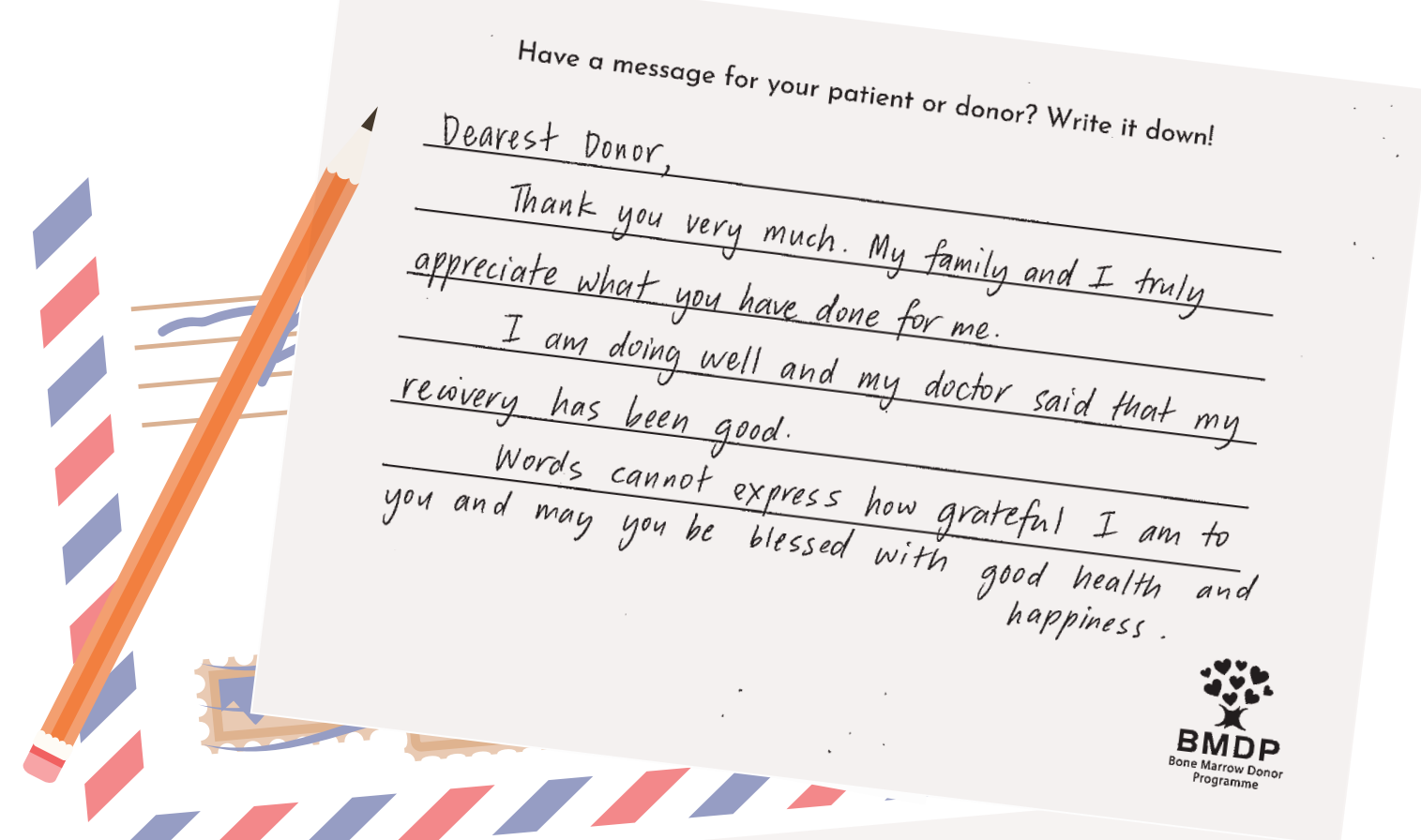
A Memorable Journey with a Single Mother

One of the most impactful experiences in Kathleen’s career involved supporting a single mother of two children who required a bone marrow transplant. “She felt the journey ahead was bleak as she did not have the financial means for treatment and her social support was very limited,” Kathleen recalls. Through persistent efforts, Kathleen helped secure financial assistance for the patient’s medical costs and coordinated with the school to support her younger son, who was struggling. “It was a learning experience, engaging various stakeholders to support the family as a whole,” she reflects. The patient recently underwent a second transplant, and Kathleen continues to provide unwavering support.

The Drive to Continue

Despite challenges, Kathleen remains motivated by the relationships she builds with patients and the partnerships with organisations like BMDP. “It is heartening to know that we are all working towards a common goal and purpose—to provide hope for patients when a transplant can be offered,” she says.

WORDS OF GRATITUDE





TWO

RECOGNISING OUR HEROES

"Leading our donor management team has instilled in me a deep sense of responsibility to ensure each donor feels valued and supported throughout their donation process. Witnessing their selfless acts and unwavering commitment to patients is the most fulfilling aspect of my work. It's a privilege to play a small role in nurturing their generosity and ensuring a positive donation experience."

Lee Shok Li
Head of Donor Management, BMDP

SERENE TAN

Match by Chance, Volunteer by Choice

Serene Tan's journey as a volunteer began with a chance encounter at one of BMDP's recruitment roadshows in 2015. Initially daunted by the perceived risks of the donation procedure, her misconceptions were quickly cleared up by the friendly roadshow volunteers. When she discovered that bone marrow donation was similar to blood donation, she committed to joining the register.

However, it took years of waiting for Serene to get the chance to be matched to a patient. "Signing up as a marrow donor does not guarantee us the opportunity to donate," she reflected. "Even if we wanted to, it does not mean we will have it." As fate would have it, after four years, she received the call that would alter her life's trajectory- she had been matched to a patient.

From Homebody to Hero

Being given the opportunity to save a patient's life felt like a blessing to Serene. While she saw herself as a quiet homebody, rather than a hero, she overcame her fear of pain and stepped out of the comforts of her ordinary life to complete the donation.

Her decision was driven by a simple philosophy: if she had the means to give back, why hesitate? Serene

hoped that with her single action, the world would slowly but surely become a better place to live in.

Beyond Donation

But Serene's story with BMDP doesn't end with her donation. This was merely the beginning of a new chapter in her life. While she had no prior experience volunteering, she was inspired to continue to contribute to BMDP's cause. Every month, she returns to BMDP to call potential prospects and ask if they would like to join the bone marrow registry. She uses her experience to ease their apprehensions. She stands as a guiding light for others, who, like her, harboured doubt.

Serene's story is a reminder that ordinary people can have an extraordinary impact. She reminds us that, despite fear and trepidation, these moments of doubt can be transformed into acts of courage.



QURRATU'AINI ABDUL RASHID

I am no Hero

At just 22 years old, Qurratu'aini Abdul Rashid became a lifeline for someone in desperate need. Qurratu'aini's journey with BMDP began when she was a teenager at ITE College Central. Encouraged by the simplicity of the registration process, which required only a cheek swab for a tissue sample, she joined the register at 18.

The Unexpected Call

Four years later, Qurratu'aini received an unexpected call from BMDP. Despite the surprise, she remained committed to the cause. Her parents, particularly her father, were initially hesitant. They worried about the potential impact of the donation on her health. "He asked me why I wanted to do this and if I really had to do it. He was initially a bit skeptical but I explained the process to him," she recalls. With determination and a desire to help others, Qurratu'aini convinced her father that she was making the right choice.

The Donation Process

Opting for the Peripheral Blood Stem Cell (PBSC) donation method, Qurratu'aini's procedure was akin to a platelet donation and spanned about eight hours each day over two days. Her case was unique as she was matched with an overseas patient, necessitating an extra effort to ensure enough blood stem cells for the journey. Despite the lengthy process, Qurratu'aini found it neither scary nor life-threatening.

A Selfless Act of Kindness

Qurratu'aini's selflessness has provided someone with a second chance at life, yet she humbly dismisses the notion of being a hero. Her satisfaction comes from knowing that her actions have made a significant difference. "Till today I feel I am no hero. I am happy enough knowing my unique deed has given someone out there a second chance at life."

Her story is a testament to the incredible impact that one person can have on another's life. It serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of signing up as a bone marrow donor - one can offer life-saving hope to patients who anxiously wait for a match.

"Till today, I feel I am no hero. I am happy enough knowing my simple act has given someone out there a second chance at life."



LAURENTIA KHOO

A Simple Act, A Profound Impact

In 2021, Laurentia Khoo, a 23-year-old student at the National University of Singapore (NUS), casually participated in a BMDP recruitment drive at VivoCity. While chatting with her friend, a BMDP ambassador approached them and explained the process of becoming a bone marrow donor. Encouraged by her friend, who reassured her that being called up was very rare, Laurentia decided to sign up, thinking it was a small act that likely wouldn't lead to anything significant.

A Surprising Opportunity

Two years later, in 2023, Laurentia received a surprising call from BMDP. Initially, she thought it was a prank. "This can't be real," she thought. But as the conversation continued, she realised the gravity of the situation: she was a match for a patient with a severe blood disease and her blood stem cells were the patient's last chance at life.



The initial shock soon gave way to a mix of excitement and nervousness. Determined to make a difference, Laurentia embraced the opportunity, feeling that it was fate that brought her and the patient together.

The Bone Marrow Donation Process

Laurentia's journey to donation began with an appointment at the BMDP office, where she underwent further testing to confirm she was a

perfect match. When the results came back positive, she was given the green light to proceed. To prepare for the procedure, Laurentia had to take injections for 5 consecutive days to stimulate her bone marrow to produce more stem cells.

"On the first day, I went to the clinic where they showed me how to administer the injections myself," she recalled. Although the process was daunting at first, she quickly adapted. On the fifth day, after her final injection, Laurentia headed to the hospital for the donation.

The Donation Experience

The donation process involved lying in bed for about seven hours with needles inserted into both arms. One needle drew out her blood, which then passed through a machine that collected the stem cells while the remaining blood was returned to her body through the other arm. This experience was entirely new to Laurentia, but the supportive nurses and BMDP staff made a significant difference. "Eventually, I even fell asleep," she laughed.

Recovery and Reflection

After the donation, Laurentia took a day to rest before returning to her normal routine. "I didn't feel any significant difference internally, though the areas where the needles had been were slightly sore," she noted.

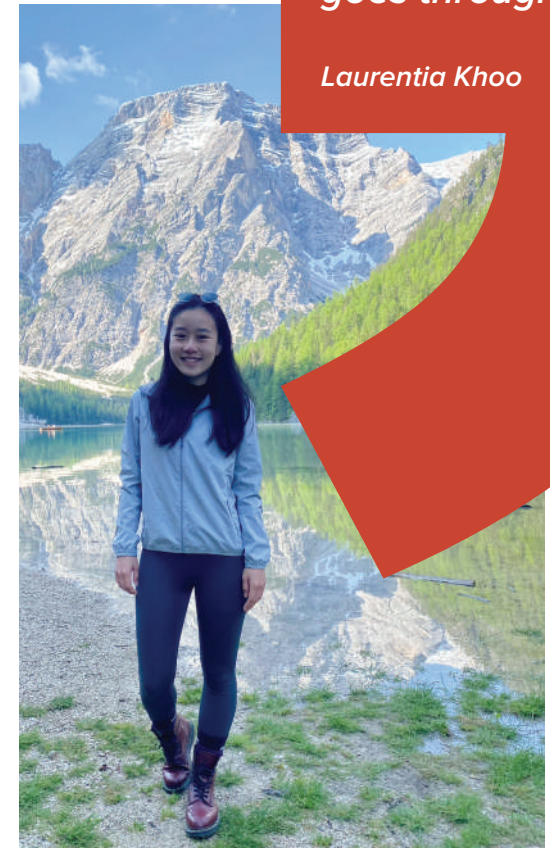
Reflecting on her experience, Laurentia felt a profound sense of fulfillment. "If you look at the big picture, this is just one day of your life. It's nothing compared to what the patient goes through. You have a chance to save someone's life," she emphasised.

Thinking about the recipient of her donation, Laurentia felt a deep connection and empathy. "You did great for going through all that," she thought.

"I can't imagine what it's like to be a patient with a blood disease. I hope you're doing well." Through her journey, Laurentia hopes to encourage more people to step forward, register as donors, and offer the gift of life to those in need.

"If you look at the big picture, this is just one day of your life. It's nothing compared to what the patient goes through."

Laurentia Khoo



KELVIN LIN

A Decision to Make a Difference

Kelvin Lin’s journey began in 2010 when he signed up as a bone marrow donor with BMDP. Driven purely by the desire to help others, his decision was met with wholehearted support from his wife, Crystal, who shared his enthusiasm for this noble cause.

The Life-Changing Call

The turning point came when Kelvin received the life-changing call informing him that he was a match for a patient in need. “The call from BMDP informing me about the potential match was exciting. I postponed all my events for the day to ensure timely assistance for the patient,” Kelvin recalled. “My wife was also 100% supportive; she knew this was like a ‘one in a million’ opportunity,” Kelvin expressed.

The Donation Process

Kelvin underwent the Peripheral Blood Stem Cell (PBSC) Collection, a non-invasive procedure. With Crystal’s unwavering support, he administered daily injections for 5 days to stimulate stem cell production and underwent the collection process with courage and determination. Kelvin’s recovery was swift, and he was back to his routine the very next day. In fact, to their delight, Crystal became pregnant ten months after the donation, dispelling myths about the impact of donation on family planning.

Reflecting on the Experience

Reflecting on his experience, Kelvin urges others to consider donation, emphasising its safety and the profound impact it can have. Kelvin has since become an ambassador for BMDP, sharing his story at

recruitment talks to encourage others to join the life-saving mission. His journey is a testament to the power of selfless giving and the importance of debunking myths surrounding bone marrow donation.



Kelvin learning how to administer the daily injections before donation

“I would like the public to know that such donation, if selected, is safe and is also a sacred one. I urge the public to answer the call and respond when needed. Your response is critical to the life of another.”

TAN YU REN

The Officer Who Answered the Call to Save a Life

A longtime blood donor, Tan Yu Ren encountered a BMDP booth where he learned about the rarity of perfect matches and decided to register as a bone marrow donor, hoping to make a difference one day.

Support and Sacrifice

When the call came in late 2020, Yu Ren was in the midst of a demanding senior police officer training course. Despite the challenges and potential disruptions to his training, he was determined to proceed. “After the phone call, I was very excited. I immediately called my then-fiancée and my family members to tell them of the news and my decision. They were all very supportive,” he said. His trainers and supervisors at Jurong Police Division also provided essential support, ensuring he could undergo the necessary medical checkups and the donation procedure without compromising his responsibilities.

Debunking Myths and Facing Fears

Contrary to common misconceptions, the donation procedure was straightforward and relatively painless. Yu Ren underwent the Bone Marrow Collection at Mount Elizabeth Hospital, where he was placed under

anesthesia for the hour-long process. “There was very minimal pain. In fact, it was more like muscle aches,” he explained. He resumed his duties within just a few days of light activity.

The Emotional Reunion

Two years later, in March 2023, Yu Ren finally met the boy whose life he had saved. Bringing a toy model of a Singapore Police Force car for the boy, Yu Ren received a heartfelt thank-you card and a custom-made cake from the grateful family. “I became very emotional reading it, and I remember crying when I read his thank-you message,” Yu Ren said. Yu Ren and the boy’s family continue to keep in touch, maintaining a bond forged through the rarest of opportunities.

A Message to the Hesitant

To those unsure about bone marrow donation, Yu Ren offers reassurance and encouragement. “For those who are scared or in doubt, please don’t hesitate,” he urges. “You never know when such little acts of yours are important to others and that you are the one being able to save someone’s life.”



“

*These days, the procedure for bone marrow transplants are more straightforward. There's really minimal risk and discomfort. But what is more important is that a simple gesture on our part can bring about a big impact to another person and his/her family as **this means a second chance for them.***

Soo Hooi Peng
Marrow Donor



“

*We are not just saving a life. **We are helping a whole family.** Not everybody gets this kind of opportunity. I am glad I got this opportunity to make a difference in some people lives.*

Ananth s/o Thirunauc Karasu
Marrow Donor

THREE

BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF HOPE

“At BMDP, my work is deeply rooted in the purpose of helping patients find matching donors. While changing a community’s mindset is not a day’s job, I find fulfillment in every small victory — whether it’s a powerful story that resonates with the public or a single person inspired to join the cause. Each step forward brings us closer to saving lives, and that is where my hope and passion lie.”

Siti Zubaidah Binte Mohd Noh
Public Education & Fundraising Manager, BMDP



MUHAMMAD ASYRAF

Never Too Young to Give Back to the Community

Muhammad Asyraf was a young student when he registered as a donor in 2014. Stumbling across a BMDP recruitment drive at Republic Polytechnic, he spontaneously decided to take a cheek swab and join the registry.

Three years later, he was matched with a patient. When Asyraf first received the news, he was skeptical about its validity and dismissed it as spam. But a phone call from a donor coordinator convinced him otherwise. He was a match - the final hope - for a patient suffering from a blood disease.

Overwhelmed with feelings of apprehension, excitement, and shock, he stood at the precipice of a momentous decision. However, being under the age of 21, this decision couldn't be made by him alone. Asyraf had to first obtain consent from his parents.



Family Support in Donation Journey

The thought of their son undergoing a procedure stirred feelings of apprehension and uncertainty. To quell the fears and doubts they had, BMDP's staff and doctors took their time to explain the donation process. While Asyraf's parents initially had their reservations, witnessing their son's unwavering dedication and passion softened their hearts. Gradually, their apprehension transformed into acceptance.

Persevering through Challenges

The donation process requires commitment. From the rigorous procedures to confirm his suitability and health, to navigating the logistics of taking days off from his national service to fulfill the pre-donation processes, every step required dedication from both Asyraf and the donor coordinators. This was made more challenging whenever the patient's health took a turn for the worse and the donation had to be postponed multiple times.

However, Asyraf remained steadfast through it all. After a successful procedure, he quickly recovered and soon returned to his daily responsibilities. His advice to potential bone marrow donors? "Educate yourselves and understand why and who you are helping so you can remain committed in your journey after signing up as a donor."

Asyraf's story serves as a reminder to embrace the power of compassion and generosity, no matter how young we may be.

SAMUEL YEN

A Passion to Serve the Community

A Surprise Opportunity

In 2023, just a few years after signing up, Samuel received a call that he was a match for a patient. "I was initially quite surprised because I have heard from those around me that they have signed up to be a marrow donor like 10-20 years ago but until today, they still have not gotten the call," he recalls.

Samuel's mother was surprised and hesitant when she first heard the news. Despite her initial reservations, she remained supportive as she knew that a match is something that is difficult to come by. Though nervous, Samuel decided to proceed with the donation.

Persevering through the Process

Samuel chose the Peripheral Blood Stem Cell (PBSC) collection method for his donation, which involved several challenges. The injections he had to take for 5 days caused fatigue and a tingling sensation in his bones. On the day of the donation, the nurses discovered that the veins in his arms were not suitable, necessitating a central line through his collarbone.

Despite questioning his choices at that moment, Samuel found strength in the knowledge that his actions could save a life. "The discomfort which I went through was all worth it because I realised that it is through these moments that make you stronger as a person and it is through small actions like this that you can potentially save someone's life," he says.

Reflecting on the Experience

As he reflects on his experience, Samuel shares a motivating quote: "You don't have to see the whole staircase. Just take the first step." He encourages those who are considering to join the marrow registry to take the first step. "The wait for you to be a matched marrow donor can be quite long and it can be daunting, but take it a step at a time," he advises. He reassures potential donors that medical professionals will ensure a smooth and safe procedure, and the leap of faith they take can significantly impact someone's life.



JUDIE CHANG

A Day in the Life of a BMDP Senior Partnerships Executive



Judie at a BMDP Roadshow

Judie Chang's role as a Senior Partnerships Executive at BMDP is diverse and impactful. From facilitating and overseeing student-organised donor drives at various youth engagements, her work is crucial in spreading awareness and ensuring the smooth operation of BMDP's initiatives.

Inspiration and Motivation

Judie's journey into the social service sector was inspired by her belief that everyone can make a difference. After eight years in this role, the small victories keep her going. "Every time I speak to someone, even if they remember just one fact about marrow donation, I consider it a win," she says.

Mentorship and Support

Judie considers herself more of a mentor and team member to the students she works with rather than a figure of authority. Her role is to collaborate with them and support their success. "It's crucial to ensure that their ideas are practical and don't interfere with their schoolwork," she explains.

Judie recalls a particularly memorable experience at a school booth where a girl signed up as a marrow donor after having donated to her brother a year prior. The girl shared her story, explaining that by saving her brother, she felt she had saved her entire family. Now, she wants to provide that same chance to someone else.

A Heartfelt Message

To potential donors who are on the fence about signing up, Judie offers a powerful reminder: "We have a lifetime ahead to decide, but to patients, we might be their only chance this lifetime." She emphasises the importance of taking that first step and highlights the profound impact it can have.

Note: As of July 2024, Judie has progressed to lead the Donor Recruitment team in her new role as Partnerships and Donor Register Manager!

"While we can choose to become a donor at any time as long as we are eligible, for patients, we might be their only chance in this lifetime."

Judie Chang



MARSITA & KHAIRUNNISA

Saving Lives One Swab at a Time



Khairunnisa (left) & Marsita (Right)

Marsita Aman and Khairunnisa Razali are staff members of BMDP. Marsita, with eight years of dedicated service, leads the swab processing team. Nisa, a newer addition to the team, brings fresh energy and perspective. Together, they navigate the complexities of patient appeals, driven by a shared commitment to saving lives.

Managing Urgent Patient Appeals

Patient appeals are always challenging and a large-scale, urgent one requires a steady hand and mind. In a recent case, an urgent appeal resulted in an unprecedented 2,000 donor sign ups over a single weekend. "The situation was overwhelming," Marsita recalls. As the primary person in charge of swab processing, Marsita had to manage numerous urgent tasks while training a new team member. "The stress was palpable, but the need for a donor was dire," she says.

Khairunnisa's First Week

Khairunnisa joined BMDP during this intense period. "My first week was incredibly high-pressure, especially

being new and during such a crucial appeal," she remembers. This period also coincided with Ramadan, adding another layer of difficulty. "Being both hungry and thirsty is never ideal for productivity, let alone during such an intense appeal." Despite this, the adrenaline and significance of the appeal fueled her perseverance.

Overcoming Challenges Together

The primary challenge was managing limited inventory while expediting orders. Additionally, Marsita and Khairunnisa had to address a sudden influx of volunteers, primarily comprising of patient's family and friends. "We delegated specific tasks to other teams. The Public Education Team helped address donor inquiries," Marsita elaborated. Khairunnisa adds, "Effectively running patient appeals, especially those with short timelines to identify a potential donor for a patient, requires a collective effort. I am grateful to the dedicated BMDP team for stepping up even in unfamiliar circumstances."

Finding Fulfillment

Despite challenges like these, the most rewarding aspect for both Marsita and Khairunnisa is facilitating the discovery of a compatible donor for patients, giving them a second chance at life. "Patient appeals notwithstanding, the most fulfilling aspect of this role is affording patients the opportunity for a second lease of life," Marsita affirms.

Marsita processing registration forms and cheek swabs.



DR. KENNETH TONG

Inspiring Hope through Giving and Service

“What little can I do to potentially make a huge impact to someone?”

Despite Dr. Kenneth Tong's professional commitments of being a veterinarian and a grassroots leader, he remains resolute in his mission to contribute meaningfully to the lives of those in need. His story is a testament to the power of kindness and the profound impact that one's commitment can have on the world.

The Start of Raising Awareness

In 2015, Dr. Tong was prompted by a radio announcement about BMDP. His involvement with BMDP deepened when he joined the Ambassador Programme, which is aimed to raise awareness about bone marrow donation.

Inspired by Ms. Angela Tan, a BMDP staff member, Dr. Tong utilised his clinic as an educational platform, displaying informational materials to increase awareness and engagement among potential donors.

Championing Hope, Inspiring Actions

Recognising BMDP's role in providing hope and treatment for patients with blood-related diseases, Dr. Tong sees BMDP's cause not just as noble but indispensable. Throughout his experience, Dr. Tong has come to understand that volunteering entails more than just dedicating time; it is about the meaningful impact created. He firmly believes that advocating

should not be intimidating but instead, empowering others. He urges others to explore volunteer opportunities, highlighting the profound personal growth and satisfaction derived from helping others.



Dr. Kenneth Tong in his clinic

Actions are the True Testaments

Dr. Tong's advocacy transcends beyond bone marrow donation; he aspires to encourage others to explore volunteer opportunities in various capacities, highlighting the importance of caring for all life forms and the environment, encouraging others to lead by example. “Show that we care – not just for humans, but also for animals, and the Earth as well.”

In the midst of our busy lives, Dr. Tong's story serves as a reminder that there are still ample opportunities to extend a helping hand and make a meaningful difference in the lives of others. We all have the ability to make a difference in people's lives and inspire hope and kindness in everyone.

SEOW ENG YI

The Light of Dedication

In the heart of every volunteer lies a story of dedication and hope. This is especially true for Seow Eng Yi, whose journey with BMDP is nothing short of inspirational.

Stepping Beyond the Classroom

Eng Yi's first encounter with BMDP was during his junior college days. His involvement with a service-learning project introduced him to BMDP, which sparked a passion that continued to burn long after the project's completion.

His first major test came in the form of a donor recruitment roadshow at Funan Mall. Facing a mix of indifference and curiosity, rejection and acceptance, he quickly learned the true meaning of resilience. Each person who stopped to listen, who overcame their apprehensions to register, reinforced Eng Yi's belief in the cause.

Among the many encounters, a particular story stands out – a man motivated to join the registry by a family member's battle with leukaemia. This poignant narrative resonated deeply with Eng Yi. It was a powerful reminder of the human faces behind the mission of BMDP, and the real impact of their work.

The Power of Knowledge

Understanding that misconceptions about bone marrow donation often hinder potential donors, Eng Yi dedicates himself to educating and informing the public. He knows that dispelling myths and spreading knowledge can transform apprehension into action and fear into courage.

Eng Yi likens his and others' participation in the BMDP registry and volunteer network to stars in the night sky – each one may seem small, but together, they illuminate the dark and guide patients towards hope. It's a beautiful analogy that captures the essence of the BMDP community: individuals uniting to light the way towards a brighter future for patients in need.

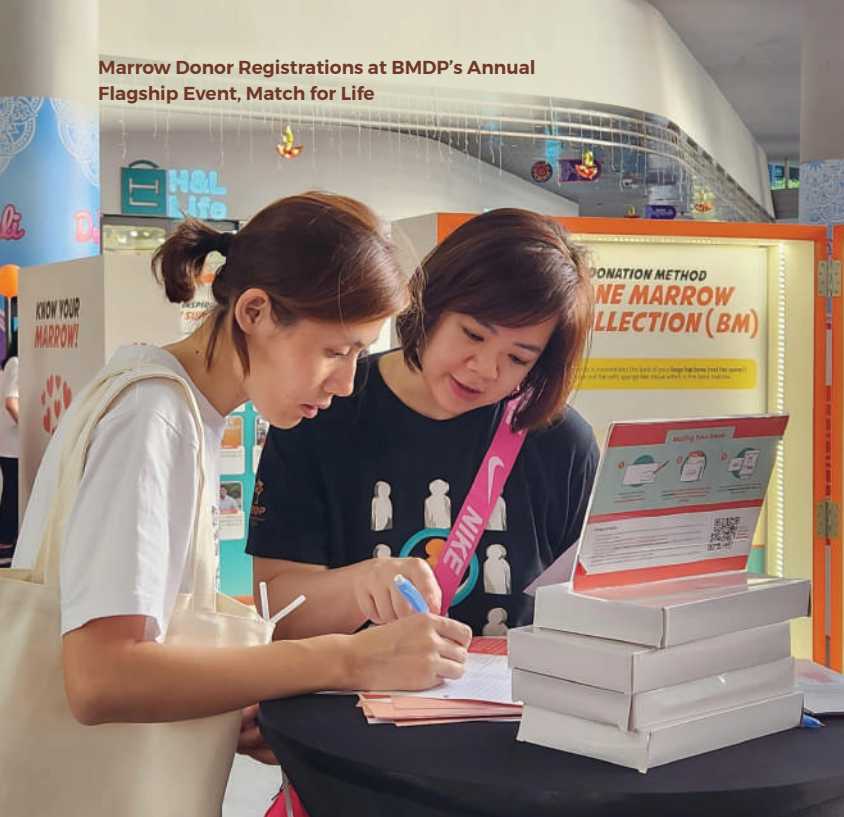
In a world where actions often speak louder than words, his dedication to BMDP is a loud call to others. He is a living reminder that we all possess the power to be agents of change, to give someone a second chance at life.



“I'd like to think of joining the BMDP registry as becoming a star in the sky. In the vast night sky, a single star is just a barely noticeable speck, but with thousands of other stars in the night sky all together, we can make the world so much brighter.”

Seow Eng Yi

Marrow Donor Registrations at BMDP's Annual Flagship Event, Match for Life



FOUR

EMPOWERING THE MISSION

BMDP's Staff at their 30th Year Anniversary Celebration



"I'm honoured in my role to drive the desired culture in BMDP, and to make BMDP a great place to work in, so that staff and volunteers alike are provided with the optimal environment and conditions to succeed in their roles. Apart from the joy I get working alongside passionate colleagues and volunteers, my greatest fulfillment has been in being empowered to elevate the people culture in BMDP, receiving support and appreciation and seeing the team come together as one."

Shauna Soh
Human Resources Manager, BMDP

DR. LIM ZI YI

Leading the Fight Against Blood Disorders with Compassion and Commitment



Dr. Lim Zi Yi's journey into the world of medicine, particularly haematology, is deeply rooted in a personal experience that left an indelible mark on his life. As a teenager, Dr. Lim witnessed his mother's battle with cancer. "I remember the fear and hopelessness as a child when I first heard the news," he recalls. However, more so than the diagnosis, he also remembers his mother's bravery, the unwavering support from his father, and the dedicated care from the medical staff.

It's no surprise, then, that he decided to specialise in haematology when the opportunity arose. "Haematology is a challenging specialty at the forefront of the newest scientific developments in diagnosis, cancer treatments, and cellular therapy," Dr. Lim explains. It allows him to combine his passion for research with meaningful, direct interactions with patients and their families.

Caring for His Patients

As a haematologist, Dr. Lim has dedicated his life to

offering the best care for patients with blood disorders, particularly those who could benefit from a bone marrow transplant. "We form very close relationships with our patients, and it is amazing and humbling to think about the level of trust they give to us to do our best to save their lives," Dr. Lim shares.

The advancements in bone marrow transplants over the past few decades have been significant, improving outcomes for many patients. For Dr. Lim, the relief and joy of telling a patient that a suitable donor has been found, and the triumph of seeing a patient successfully discharged after a transplant, never gets old.

A Decade with BMDP

Dr. Lim's commitment to fighting blood disorders extends beyond his role as a haematologist. Ten years ago, he began volunteering with BMDP, an organisation that shares the same mission as him. "BMDP was a smaller charity when I first got involved, but it has always been

a passionate organisation with a cause that deeply resonated with me—to help blood disorder patients and their families," he says. Over the years, Dr. Lim has witnessed BMDP's growth, facilitating transplants not only in Singapore but globally.

Overcoming Challenges and Building a Legacy

As BMDP's President, Dr. Lim has faced significant challenges, particularly as the organisation experienced rapid growth. "We had to 'up our game' to ensure that we could give our best to our patients and their families," he shares. Under his leadership, and with the support of experienced volunteers and staff, BMDP has evolved into a modern, efficient, and impactful charity, setting a strong foundation for the future.

Dr. Lim is particularly proud of the profound way in which BMDP has touched patients' lives. "You just have to be present at any of our donor-recipient meetups to appreciate the impact that BMDP and its registry has," he says. These meetings are life-changing experiences for both the patient and the donor, highlighting the direct impact that BMDP's work has on saving lives.

With the pace of medical development accelerating over the last decade, new forms of transplantation and cellular therapy are improving patient outcomes. As part of BMDP's mission, new initiatives are being developed to support local doctors and scientists, enabling more patients to benefit from these novel life-saving therapies.

A Vision for the Future

Dr. Lim's vision for the future of BMDP is ambitious. He hopes to see the organisation continue to serve as a focal point for the haematology community in Singapore, fostering public awareness, supporting patients and families, and investing in the local medical and scientific teams.

To new volunteers, Dr. Lim encourages them to take the time to understand the work BMDP does. "You will realise that there are so many ways you can make an impact on the fight against blood disorders," he shares.

Dr. Lim's story is a powerful reminder of the difference one person can make. Whether through volunteering, donating, or simply spreading the word, every effort counts in the fight against blood disorders. If you're inspired by Dr. Lim's journey and the work of BMDP, consider signing up as a bone marrow donor or volunteering with BMDP.





MARC HICKMAN

Scoring Life Goals

What started as a simple staff football team at Credit Suisse evolved into a beacon of hope and support for those battling blood disorders. Marc Hickman's journey, alongside the CBD Wanderers, has been marked by both athletic achievements and heartfelt charitable efforts, all in honour of a beloved friend and founder of the team, Simon Hurley.

The Birth of CBD Wanderers

In 2009, with many players leaving the company, a rebrand was in order. The team was then reborn as the CBD Wanderers FC. Pat O'Sullivan and Simon Hurley were key figures in establishing the club. Early challenges included gathering a consistent team each

week, but the ethos of camaraderie, fun, and post-match beers fostered a strong club culture that thrives to this day.

Relation to BMDP

The real turning point came in 2016 with the passing of Simon Hurley, who bravely battled blood cancer. Through Simon's journey, Marc became aware of the BMDP and its mission. "BMDP is an amazing organisation as Singapore's only register of volunteer bone marrow donors," Marc shared. Inspired by Simon's legacy and his sister Sam, a clinical nurse specialist in the cancer ward at Barts Hospital in London, Marc felt compelled to support BMDP.

Honouring Simon Hurley

From 2016 to 2019, the CBD Wanderers held the annual Simon Hurley Memorial Trophy, with BMDP present to raise awareness and recruit new marrow donors. In 2017, the club began proudly displaying the BMDP logo on their football shirts, culminating in their first-ever EFL Premiership title win in 2018. Celebrations included an Open Top Bus Parade around Singapore, further raising awareness for BMDP. The club also participated in BMDP's flagship event, Match For Life, in 2019 at Our Tampines Hub.

Throughout the years, CBD Wanderers have invited BMDP to set up booths at their matches, most recently in May 2024, securing more sign-ups for the marrow donor register.

Corporate Outreach

Marc's commitment to BMDP extended beyond football. At Credit Suisse, he organised a large donor drive in March 2019, resulting in 57 new sign-ups. Despite COVID-19 and the acquisition of Credit Suisse

by UBS, Marc remains focused on supporting BMDP at his new workplace.

"I'm now excited and focused on opportunities at UBS to help BMDP. It will be amazing to do a donor drive later this year and try to get a record number of donor sign-ups from a corporate in one day!"

Marc Hickman and the CBD Wanderers FC exemplify the profound impact of combining passion and compassion, creating a legacy of hope and community spirit.



Marc (bottom row, second from right) & the CBD Wanderers

LIN TAN

Collective Change Institute's Partnership with BMDP

Sometimes, the most profound connections are made in the most unexpected places. For Lin Tan, Director of Training at Collective Change Institute (CCI), a routine Grab ride turned into a catalyst for a significant partnership with BMDP.

Discovering BMDP

The journey began when Lin heard Jean Danker on the radio during a Grab ride, discussing the importance of bone marrow donation and encouraging listeners to take a cheek swab. Intrigued and motivated, Lin reached out to BMDP on Instagram. "That was the start of a fulfilling engagement with BMDP," Lin recalls.

Championing the Cause

CCI is renowned for its high standards in professional coaching and coaching certification courses. The team, driven by a mission to create impactful change, found a unique way to support BMDP through their expertise in coaching. "Our game is the IMPACT game. This drives us to go beyond simply training people in skill sets which can be passive. We create opportunities for our Coach changemakers to truly go out there and change lives," Lin explains. CCI's Coaching for Change (C4C) programme

became a cornerstone of their support for BMDP. The programme offers life coaching services to the public, where participants undergo up to six private coaching sessions focused on achieving personal goals. At the end of the programme, coachees make a donation. "Since the inception of our C4C programme, our network of coaches have to date coached close to 1,000 coachees," Lin notes. Through this programme, CCI raised \$20,000 for BMDP, demonstrating the power of combining professional expertise with a noble cause.



Lin Tan (second from right) and her colleagues

Sustaining Engagement

One of the main challenges CCI faced was maintaining engagement over the six-month fundraising period. "Constant reminders on our 'Why' keeps both the coach and coachee grounded that whatever they are doing is for a great cause," Lin says. The team's dedication and the supportive partnership with BMDP helped navigate these challenges, ensuring the programme's success.

A Message to Other Organisations

Reflecting on the journey, Lin expresses deep appreciation for the collaboration with BMDP. "We really appreciate the openness and fluidity of the BMDP team. Their energy, passion, and sense of partnership have made this campaign truly enjoyable and meaningful for us and our volunteer coaches," she says.

Lin encourages other organisations to explore creative ways to leverage their resources and networks for the greater good. "A fundraising activity is an opportunity for employees or clients to enjoy and grow from the process of giving. Seeing the difference they can make on someone who needs hope and support in difficult times offers them a profound experience," Lin emphasises.

"Seeing the difference they can make on someone who needs hope and support in difficult times offers them a profound experience."

Lin Tan



WONG KUM KIT

Guiding Future Generations

Six years ago, Wong Kum Kit was assigned the role of facilitator to a group of Singapore Polytechnic students, leading their school outreach efforts for BMDP's first Match for Life event at Our Tampines Hub. Little did he know, this assignment would ignite a passion for advocating and bringing hope to those battling blood disorders, leading him to sign up as a donor.

From the outset, Kum Kit and his students resonated deeply with BMDP's mission of welfare and support. Together, they dedicated themselves to ensuring the success of every event they organised and facilitated. A pivotal moment came in 2023 with the triumphant relaunch of Match for Life at Kampung Admiralty.

Nurturing Hope Through Challenges

Working with BMDP has not been without its challenges. Securing sponsors and reaching out to potential pledgers, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, required innovative solutions and unwavering determination. "The team at BMDP has been a pleasure to work with and is always supportive of the ideas from my students," Kum Kit notes. This collaborative spirit often led to positive and unexpected outcomes, demonstrating the power of teamwork and creativity.

Pledging Dedication

Although Kum Kit has yet to be called as a donor, he stands ready to contribute when the time comes. In the meantime, he remains committed to partnering with BMDP alongside his students.

Looking ahead, Kum Kit aims to continue the great work his team has built with BMDP. His advice to other educators and institutions who are thinking of partnering with community organisations is straightforward: "Please do so because there is no better way to educate than to give our students such meaningful and impactful opportunities!"



Wong Kum Kit (right, bottom row) with his students (top row)

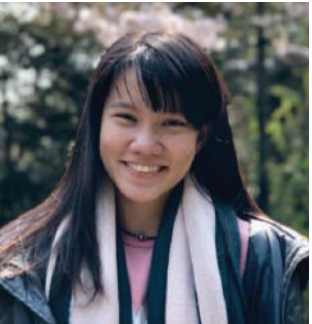
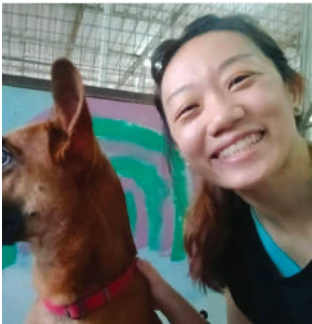
"There's no better way to educate than by providing our students with such meaningful opportunities."

Wong Kum Kit

NEO SWEE LAN & LOW WAN ZI

Guiding the Next Generation of Lifesavers

At Republic Polytechnic, lecturers Neo Swee Lan and Low Wan Zi are more than just educators—they are champions for the BMDP. Through their dedicated efforts, they have not only educated their students about the importance of marrow donation but have also inspired a wave of new ambassadors, fostering a spirit of community service and compassion.



Neo Swee Lan (left) and Low Wan Zi (right)

Leading the Charge

Over the past two years, both Swee Lan and Wan Zi have been instrumental in organising the annual marrow donation drive at Republic Polytechnic. These events are more than just drives; they are educational campaigns aimed at dispelling myths and encouraging donor sign-ups. Wan Zi highlights their collaborative efforts, "As a result of our hard work, we had 100 newly registered donors from our donation drive last year! Our students were excited and inspired that they could

make a real difference in someone's life."

However, organising these drives also comes with its challenges. Swee Lan points out the difficulties in managing student expectations and meeting deadlines. Wan Zi adds that working with external vendors and creating appealing publicity campaigns can be daunting for new students. However, both educators praise Judie from BMDP for her unwavering support and guidance. "Judie patiently guided our students and shared creative ideas from her vast experience, making the process fun and pleasant," Wan Zi remarks.

Advice to Other Educators

The impact of working with BMDP extends beyond the drives themselves. Wan Zi reflects, "Working with BMDP taught me the limit of my impact as one person. By empowering my students, we create a larger impact together."

To other educators and institutions considering partnering with BMDP, both Swee Lan and Wan Zi offer enthusiastic encouragement. "Don't hesitate! BMDP staff are very helpful and encouraging," Swee Lan advises. Wan Zi adds, "Working with BMDP provides a platform for students to hone their communication skills with external parties and foster a spirit of helping the community."

DALSTEN TAN

Pedaling for a Purpose

In the world of charitable giving, there are those who talk about making a difference, and there are those like Dalsten Tan whose action speaks louder than words.

Dalsten's journey with BMDP started with a simple desire to do something impactful during his break before National Service. This desire turned into action when he decided to marry his passion for cycling with a purpose greater than personal fitness. His search for a suitable charity led him to BMDP, where he was drawn to their mission and the opportunity to double his impact through a dollar-matching programme.



300 Kilometers of Commitment

Not one to shy away from a challenge, Dalsten embarked on a grueling 300-kilometer ride—a

testament to his dedication and physical endurance. With preparation focused on nutrition and safety, Dalsten and his friend Ansel, pedaled through the night while most of the city slept. It was a mission fuelled by determination to contribute to a cause that saves lives.

The support Dalsten received was overwhelming and reaffirmed his belief in the generosity of his community—from family and friends to schoolmates and fellow cyclists. This collective effort not only boosted his morale but also significantly contributed to BMDP's mission.

Recognition and Reflection

At BMDP's 30th-anniversary celebration, Dalsten's efforts were recognised with a token of appreciation, a moment that was both humbling and heartening for him.

Dalsten's advice to anyone hesitating to start a fundraiser is simple yet powerful: Just go for it. Whether you raise a small amount or a large sum, the act of starting something, of trying to make a difference, is what truly matters.

“There was no fear or hesitation when choosing to fundraise for BMDP. I was excited to do it! Making a change in peoples’ lives, big or small, mattered to me. Through this fundraiser, I hoped to make a difference in the BMDP beneficiaries’ lives, and through that, also give me a chance to grow through the experience.”

AARUSHI MENON

From Online Tutor to Fundraiser



A Mission Born of Opportunity

When the global COVID-19 pandemic halted then-17-year-old Aarushi's academic plans, she saw a chance to pass her time meaningfully. With a deep-rooted passion for French and Mathematics, she began offering free online tuition. Aarushi's engaging lessons were a hit with some students even offering payment. As she was underage and not legally permitted to accept funds, she decided to redirect these earnings towards a charity of her choice.

Choosing BMDP

After learning about the challenges faced by those awaiting bone marrow transplants and the stark realities of blood diseases, Aarushi desired to make an impact on this critical, yet often overlooked, health issue. Her first call with BMDP reaffirmed her decision about supporting this organisation and together with a representative from BMDP, Aarushi developed the fundraising campaign aptly named “Your Kindness is Someone's Hope.”

A Community Effort

The response was overwhelming. From parents moved by her dedication to strangers touched by her cause, the donations poured in, each contributing to a growing fund that mirrored the community's collective spirit. Seeing the funds grew from \$10, to \$100, and even \$1,000, the campaign showcased the power of community.

As Aarushi reflected on her journey, her message to other young individuals was clear: the act of giving, regardless of scale, has the power to transform lives. Her story tells us that with initiative and passion, anyone can contribute to making the world a better place.

“Give back to society as much as you can, because the more good you do, the more good will come to you!”

ELEANOR CHOO

Eleanor's Mission of Urgency

On 18 March 2020, as the Malaysian Government imposed a 'Movement Control Order,' Eleanor Choo received an urgent request from BMDP: to deliver stem cells crucial for a life-saving transplant scheduled on the very same day. "The fear about the COVID-19 pandemic did not occur to me. Instead, I was focused on planning my route from Singapore to Johor Bahru so that the beneficiary could get the stem cells quickly," Eleanor explained.

When Eleanor informed her friend, Neriman, about the situation, Neriman immediately offered to help. "When I heard, I offered to send her from the BMDP office to the Woodlands Checkpoint," Neriman recounted.



Eleanor (middle) and friends

The Journey

With no time to waste, the duo quickly headed to the laboratory to collect the precious package. They then navigated through rush hour traffic to reach the Woodlands Checkpoint. From there, Eleanor pressed on, navigating her way through the Causeway to meet a doctor in Johor Bahru, who then helped to transport the bag of stem cells safely to the patient

in Ampang. Eleanor was well aware of the risks and uncertainties associated with the journey, especially with the impending Movement Control Order. "There was a tinge of uncertainty because of the impending Movement Control Order which was to start within the next couple of hours. However, there was a patient who needed the stem cells, and for whom this could mean the difference between life and death. I knew I had to help," she said.



Eleanor and her mother at a BMDP appreciation event

Commitment and Dedication

Despite the uncertainties and difficulties, both Eleanor and Neriman expressed their desire to offer assistance again should the need arise. Their determination and dedication to help save a life under such challenging circumstances exemplify the spirit of volunteerism and selflessness.

SAUNAK RAI

Transforming Lives Through Volunteering

Saunak Rai first learned about the BMDP through a chance meeting with a volunteer at an MRT station. Intrigued by the cause, he initially signed up as a financial donor. It wasn't until a conversation with a cricket friend, who is also a doctor, that Saunak truly understood the importance of becoming a marrow donor. "My friend convinced me how important it is to sign up as a marrow donor and whatever small & temporary side effects I may encounter is not comparable to saving a life," Saunak recalls. This realisation led him to become an active volunteer, spreading awareness about the cause.

First Volunteering Experience

Saunak's first experience volunteering with BMDP was at a roadshow at Wisma Atria. Initially, it was challenging as people tended to avoid him. However, he quickly learned from the BMDP staff members who used the catchphrase, "Would you like to give 5 minutes to save a life?" This approach helped him successfully sign up a few donors. "It was a tiring but very satisfying experience," he says.

Inspiring Others

Saunak encourages everyone to volunteer and sign up as marrow donors. "Giving some part of your time to any volunteer service gives you huge satisfaction and

an opportunity to learn and meet other volunteers," he explains. He also believes in the power of goodness and the impact it has on the world. "I would wish that the matrix of success in our society is changed from money or position you have, to people you have helped."

Six Years of Dedication and Counting

Saunak has been volunteering with BMDP for six years. His primary source of inspiration comes from the videos of stem cell recipients. "The relief in their eyes, the happiness in their family — all that makes our volunteering worthwhile," he shares. Knowing that even one marrow donor can save a life is a powerful motivator for him.



Saunak (most left) & other BMDP volunteers & staff

"Would you like to give 5 minutes to save a life?"

Saunak

BE PART OF THE CAUSE:

Join, Volunteer, Donate, Partner with Us

As we reach the final pages of this book, we are reminded of the incredible power of human kindness and the profound impact one individual can have on another's life. The stories within this book have painted a vivid picture of resilience, courage, and the life-changing potential of bone marrow transplants. Each story is a testament to BMDP's mission: **to save lives through the recruitment of committed donors and to foster a supportive community of individuals committed to this cause.**

At the heart of each story is BMDP's unwavering dedication to finding a donor for every patient. The lives transformed through BMDP's services highlight the essential role we all play in this mission. Now, more than ever, we need your help to continue this life-saving work.



Embark on your journey with us! Scan the QR code to discover how.

We encourage you to **join the donor registry**. By registering, you give hope to those waiting for a match. Your decision could give someone a second chance at life, turning a story of despair into one of survival and joy.

——— Learn more at bmdp.org/join-the-register

Consider **volunteering with BMDP**. Your time, skills, and passion can make a significant difference, whether through organising donor drives, supporting patients, or spreading awareness. Every effort counts and brings us closer to our goal of saving more lives.

——— Learn more at bmdp.org/volunteer-with-us

Donating to BMDP ensures that we can continue our critical work, providing the necessary resources for patient support, donor recruitment, and research. Your generosity fuels our mission and extends the reach of our impact.

——— Donate at bmdp.org/make-a-gift

Finally, we invite you to **partner with BMDP**. Whether you are an organisation, a business, or a community group, your partnership can amplify our efforts and create a broader network of support for those in need.

——— Connect with us at dr@bmdp.org

Together, we can create a world where every patient finds their match and every story ends with hope. Join us in this mission, and let's make a difference, one life at a time. Thank you for being a part of our journey and for believing in the power of giving.



BMDP

Bone Marrow Donor
Programme



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8 Sinaran Drive

#03-02, Novena Specialist Center

Singapore 307470