

Dear Parent,

April 19th, 2017

We are honoured to be partnering with **Glebe Secondary School** for the “GetSwabbed” Campaign and empower young Canadians to give life by registering to be a stem cell donor.

The “GetSwabbed” Campaign is a coast-to-coast initiative to educate and inform high school students about the need for stem cell donors and how they can give hope by registering to be a potential match for someone in need.

At any given time there are hundreds of Canadian patients who are searching for an unrelated stem cell donor. The most common need for a stem cell transplant is to treat some forms of cancers or blood disorders, which may cause an inability to generate healthy red blood cells that fight infection or healthy platelets that control excess bleeding. Patients are more likely to find a matching donor from within their own ethnic group.

Today, three out of four stem cell donors chosen to help give life are male, half of them under the age of 36. Younger male donor stem cells potentially offer patients a better outcome by reducing post-transplant complications such as graft vs. host disease. Canada has been identified as a growing mosaic of ethnic populations, and one of the main challenges in this country is finding suitable stem cell donors to meet the needs of ethnically diverse patients. Registering young, male and diverse donors will allow the OneMatch Stem Cell and Marrow Network to change the composition of the donor base to better reflect the needs of patients in Canada and around the world.

Canadian Blood Services will be holding a swabbing event at **Glebe Secondary School** on **Monday May 8th, 2017** to register potential stem cell donors.

There is a possibility that your son/daughter may register at a swab event organized at school. The age criteria to register, is 17-35 years of age. Although One Match accepts individuals 17 and older to register as a stem cell donor, we encourage all registrants to have a conversation with parents/legal guardians regarding their decision to join OneMatch Stem Cell and Marrow Network. We need to ensure that all potential donors that register are fully committed to the program and are supported by their families in making that decision.

We have outlined the registration process on the following page but we also encourage you to visit our website [www.blood.ca/stem-cells](http://www.blood.ca/stem-cells) for more information about OneMatch so that this can be discussed as a family prior to the event.

We are looking for your support in encouraging your child to give life to patients in need.

Sincerely,

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## More information about becoming a stem cell donor



### Registering to be a stem cell donor

All it takes is ten minutes to fill in a general health questionnaire, a simple swab of the cheek and a willingness to donate to any patient in need.

This information is then safely and securely transferred to OneMatch, to be entered into our donor database.

### Protection of Personal Information

Canadian Blood Services is committed to protecting the privacy and security of the personal information of OneMatch registrants. We do so by following relevant laws and best practices. Canadian Blood Services will always refer to a registrant within the OneMatch registry by a unique identifier donor number when disclosing information to transplant centre health care providers and/or an international registry.

OneMatch will disclose information only to the extent that is necessary to determine suitability as a stem cell donor.

### What it means to donate

Not everyone who registers with OneMatch will be matched to a patient and asked to donate, but each registrant provides hope for those waiting. A person could, however, be a match within a few months of registering, a year later or even seven years later. That's why it's important to understand what's involved – and the commitment – before registering.

When selected as a potential match for a patient, OneMatch will contact the registrant to inquire if they are still willing and able to proceed with the donation. Additional health testing will then be performed to ensure the suitability of the match.

There are two methods a registrant could be asked to donate; from the peripheral blood or from the bone marrow. These lifesaving stem cells are transferred to the patient to restore their health. To find out more about these procedures please visit [www.blood.ca/stem-cells](http://www.blood.ca/stem-cells).

### Why students?

A registry comprised of younger, and more ethnically diverse registrants will better meet the needs of Canadian and international patients, and will ultimately save lives through improved patient outcomes. Currently Canada's stem cell Network is comprised of over 365,000 searchable registrants. Only 44% of the Network's composition contains potential donors 17 to 35 years old and only 19% of the Network's composition are males aged 17 to 35. In the last year, 80% of donors used for Canadian patients were under the age of 36. It is essential that Canadian Blood Services closes this gap to better serve all our patients.

### We need your help

Patients are counting on the generosity of young people to become stem cell donors because no one in their family is a match. We are looking for your support in encouraging your child to give life to our patients.