



# Yom Kippur

**Swab a Cheek, Incribed for Life**

#inscribed4life

Yom Kippur is a day of reflection, renewal and commitment. Since 2010, Gift of Life Bone Marrow Foundation ("Gift of Life") has worked with synagogues across the country to bring congregants the opportunity to begin the New Year with a simple act that saves lives.

*It is written in the Talmud, "He who saves one life, it is as if he had saved the entire world."*

Gift of Life and the Religious Action Center ("RAC") are thrilled to be partnering with your congregation. Hosting a donor recruitment drive is a fun, easy, and meaningful way for your congregation to help save the life of someone needing a bone marrow or blood stem cell transplant by joining the donor registry.

## ***Swab a Cheek, Incribed for Life***

Our congregation has partnered with Gift of Life Bone Marrow Foundation and the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism to bring an exciting and unique opportunity to help save lives: through a donor recruitment drive to be held on the opening day of Religious School, August 24<sup>th</sup>, beginning at 9:15 a.m. and on Yom Kippur (time to be announced later).

Potential donors will be entered into the bone marrow registry. From the time you join the registry until your 61<sup>st</sup> birthday, you could be a donor for someone suffering from a life-threatening blood disease and help save their life. Registration is simple, it requires a quick cheek swab and completion of a consent form. Potential donors must be between the ages of 18 and 59 and in general good health.

The only way you will ever know if you can help save a life is by taking the first step and get tested! The entire process takes less than 10 minutes!

For more information and to volunteer, contact **Ellen Woll** (727-771-7761; [eswoll@verizon.net](mailto:eswoll@verizon.net))

# Gift of Life Bone Marrow Foundation Background

Leukemia, lymphoma, and other blood diseases are random killers. They can strike any of us at any time. For many, there is hope of a cure through a bone marrow or blood stem cell transplant. That is of course, if a matching donor can be found.

Gift of Life is one of North America's public donor, bone marrow and blood stem cell registries, and a world leader helping children and adults find the matches they need when they need them. An associate registry of the National Marrow Donor Program, Gift of Life is accredited by the World Marrow Donor Association.

Since tissue type is inherited, it is likely that a matching donor and recipient will share a similar ethnic background. In the early 1990's, there were so few Jews in the registry that Jewish patients had less than a 5% chance of finding a match. Today, because of Gift of Life's targeted recruitment strategy in Jewish communities across the U.S., that figure is now greater than 70%.

One in 200 Americans will need a bone marrow or blood stem cell transplant in their lifetime. While 30% of patients can find a suitable donor from within their family, 70% must turn to the bone marrow registry to find a match.

## Religious Action Center

For 50 years, the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism ("the RAC") has been the hub of Jewish social justice and legislative activity in Washington, D.C. As the DC office of the Union for Reform Judaism, the RAC educates and mobilizes the Reform Jewish community on legislative and social concerns, advocating on more than 70 different issues, including economic justice, civil rights, religious liberty, Israel and more. The RAC's advocacy work is completely non-partisan and pursues public policies that reflect the Jewish values of social justice that form the core of our mandate.

The RAC's work is mandated by the Union for Reform Judaism, whose 900+ congregations across North America include 1.5 million Reform Jews, and the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), whose membership includes more than 1,800 Reform rabbis. Representatives of these two organizations, as well as the Union's affiliates, comprise the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism, which governs the RAC's policy positions.

In December 2013, Jay Feinberg, Gift of Life's Founder and CEO, received the Maurice N. Eisendrath Bearer of Light Award. The award is in memory of Rabbi Maurice N. Eisendrath, the Executive Director and President of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations from 1943 – 1973; this award is the highest honor bestowed by the Reform Movement. Jay shares this award with other luminaries such as Michael J. Fox, Professor Jeffrey Sachs, Rabbi Richard Hirsch, and Abba Eban.

# How Do I Sign Up To Be Swabbed? How Do I Volunteer To Help?



Dear TAS Congregant,

This year we are very excited that members of **Temple Ahavat Shalom** will have an opportunity to save a life this High Holiday season. We will be partnering with the Religious Action Center and Gift of Life Bone Marrow Foundation to host a bone marrow donor recruitment drive on August 24<sup>th</sup>, the first day of Religious School and on October 4<sup>th</sup> which is Yom Kippur. Joining the registry does not mean you will automatically be a donor, but it does mean you can be a potential donor until your 61<sup>st</sup> birthday. Since tissue type is inherited, a patient's best chance of finding a genetic match lies with donors of similar ethnicity. The only way you will ever know if you can help save a life is by taking the first step and get tested!

Registration is simple, involving a cheek swab and completion of a quick consent form. Eligible donors must be between the ages of 18-59 and in general good health. We will begin swabbing at 9:15 on August 24<sup>th</sup>. The timing for Yom Kippur will be sent to you at a later date.

For more information about Gift of Life, please visit <http://www.yomkippurproject.org>. To find out more, sign up to be swabbed or to volunteer, please contact **Ellen Woll:** **727-771-7761; eswoll@verizon.net.**

***Thank you and we look forward to seeing you there!***

## Frequently Asked Questions

### ***Q. What happens to my sample?***

**A.** The completed kit is returned to the Gift of Life office along with your signed consent form. The consent form is reviewed to ensure that the donor meets the eligibility requirements. The forms are then scanned into the Gift of Life computer database for tracking purposes. If the donor meets the requirements, the swabs are sent to the lab for testing/typing. If the donor does NOT meet the requirements, the swabs are sent to the lab for destruction and disposal.

### ***Q. Is there anyone else who can have access to or use my DNA for purposes other than for bone marrow donation?***

**A.** No. Access to samples is strictly controlled. Once envelopes are sealed, they remain sealed until they arrive at the lab, where they are processed.

### ***Q: What are blood stem cells and how are they collected?***

**A:** Blood stem cells circulate in the blood and produce new blood cells. In the United States, approximately 80 percent of the donor requests are to collect stem cells from the blood rather than the bone marrow. The stem cells are collected through a procedure where a cell separating machine filters out the stem cells. **No anesthesia is used during the procedure.**

### ***Q: What is bone marrow and how is it collected?***

**A:** Bone marrow is tissue found in the hollow cavities of the body's large bones. In adults, marrow produces new blood cells. Bone marrow is collected from the donor's pelvic bone. The donation involves a needle aspiration, performed under anesthetic. Typically, the donor enters a medical center's outpatient facility in the morning and goes home in the afternoon. In the United States, this procedure is used approximately 20 percent of the time.

### ***Q. Can I choose the procedure I prefer (bone marrow vs. stem cells?)***

**A.** The transplant physician decides which stem cell product will offer his or her patient the best treatment. There are clinical reasons why one may be better than the other for a particular patient.

### ***Q. What are the risks associated with donating bone marrow?***

**A.** Risks associated with bone marrow donation would be those pertaining to general anesthesia and minor bruising.

### ***Q. What if I am a match for someone who lives in another country?***

**A.** You will not be required to travel out of the country to donate. Your donation will take place at a U.S. collection center, and the cells will then be transported to the patient.

### ***Q. How fast do my marrow or stem cells regenerate?***

**A.** Bone marrow regenerates within 4-6 weeks. Donors can give marrow many times throughout their lifetime.

***Q: Will it cost me money to donate?***

**A:** No. You will not have to pay for any medical tests, the collection, or anything else associated with the donation process. The patient's insurance pays for the procedures. Additionally, all donors are covered by an insurance policy that Gift of Life takes out for them, in case of any unforeseen medical needs.

***Q. If I donate, will I be able to meet the recipient?***

**A:** In the U.S., there is a one year waiting period after donating before you can meet the recipient. If, after the year has passed, both the donor and recipient wish to meet, they must sign consent forms and the contact information will be released to both parties.

***Q: If I am identified as a match, what are the steps in donating?***

**A:** There are three basic steps:

**Confirmatory Typing (CT)**

If identified as a potential match, donors will be contacted via telephone by Gift of Life staff and will go through a blood test to determine if the donor is the best match.

**Medical Work Up:**

If the individual is a match, the transplant center will request a physical exam and health history evaluation.

**Donation – Bone Marrow or Stem Cells:**

If the donor is medically cleared, he or she is scheduled for the donation. Depending on the request from the transplant center, the donor will be asked to donate either bone marrow or blood stem cells.