

# Stem Cell Donor Makes "Powerful" Choice To Save Stranger

Posted by [Cyn](#) On 09/16/2020

**WALDORF, Md.** - Waldorf resident Bill Righter made what he called a "powerful" choice to donate stem cells to save the life of a stranger battling leukemia.

The 53-year-old medical administrator's decision puts the spotlight on the importance of stem cell donation even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## I Was All In

I spoke with Righter and asked him to share his journey. He said it all started several years ago. "It all started about 8 years ago. There was a young man in our area, they were doing a donation drive. Me, being the father of 6, my heart was out there for a child in need. I went out there and did my swab and that was the last I heard of it."

That was until a month ago. Righter said he was relaxing in his recliner when someone came to his door with an overnight envelope from DKMS in hand. "It said you were match. There was a number on it to call. I called right away. They said I was a possible match and they wanted to screen me further. I was all in."

## 'Unbelievably Excited' To Help

The 53-year-old medical administrator said he was "unbelievably excited" to know that he could help save a life. He said the process of screening was straightforward.

"We did an interview the following week going over medical history. The gentleman said it would be about a month or 45 days. A month later, I did get a call. They said I was a possible match. They had to do more tests. I went right away. Within a couple of days after that, they said, 'You are an actual match for a patient.'"

I was beyond the moon excited about that. How often do you really get a chance to help someone like this? I went in and had my final tests at Georgetown. They did a COVID test. Within a week, I was scheduled for donation."

## Nervous About Needles

Righter admits he was nervous about the donation process since he doesn't care for needles. It turned out, there was nothing to be nervous about.

"It was unbelievably organized. I was in awe of how well-taken-care-of I was. Everyone was great. The people at DKMS and the people at Georgetown."

Before donating, Righter had to undergo a series of daily shots to promote stem cell growth. "Those shots, I won't lie, they were a little painful. There are some people that would say it hurts, but I went into it with a mindset that it's minor in comparison with the patient I'm helping. It seemed like an easy thing to do for me."

## History Of Service

Bill Righter said the donation process itself was pretty easy. "We started about 9:30, 10 by 2:30 that day I was done and ready to walk out of the hospital. I was unbelievably excited. I can't tell you the feeling that goes through your head when you know you're helping someone like this."

Service is nothing new to Righter. He spent 14 years in the military before going into the medical field.

"I can tell you the morning of, I had tears in my eyes afterwards. How often can you say you've helped save a life? It's an unbelievable powerful thing. The process itself has relatively little discomfort. If anybody is on the fence about it, I would be glad to talk to them and get them the process."

He said the pain of families coping with blood cancers really hit home for him. "A couple of months before this happened, my wife's boss's husband passed away from leukemia. It was near and dear to my wife's heart. It was hard to pass up."

The father-of-six said he thought about what would happen if his child fell ill. "God forbid myself or anybody in my family would need help. I hope there would be somebody out there willing to do exactly what I did."

## How You Can Help

A representative from DKMS spoke with me about the need for donors like Bill. [DKMS](#) is an international nonprofit organization dedicated to eradicating blood cancers like Leukemia and other blood-related illnesses.

She said 70% of people battling leukemia and lymphoma require donations from outside of their families. However, due to COVID concerns, DKMS has postponed all in-person drives to find stem cell and bone marrow donors.

They've created a new virtual registration kit to allow potential donors to administer the initial test to themselves at home. "Through this virtual registration, the public can order a registration kit through [DKMS.org](#) that will be sent directly to their home. Individuals can easily perform the cheek swab themselves and mail the kit back to DKMS."

[Click here](#) to learn more about registration and get your kit.

## Sobering Numbers

The representative provided some sobering numbers about blood cancer:

- Every 3 minutes, an American is diagnosed with a blood cancer.
- Every day, at least 21 DKMS donors give patients a second chance at life.
- Every 9 minutes, an American is lost to a blood cancer.

"The incredible uniqueness of our DNA means finding a matching donor is extremely rare; finding a match is a numbers game, so it is critical that we register as many donors as possible."

---

Copyright © 2020 thebaynet.com. All rights reserved.