

Neighborhood News

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Bone Marrow Plea

Officials at two area hospitals are urging the public to give the gift of life by participating in a Bone Marrow Stem Cell Drive on March 19 and 20.

Specialists at Long Island Jewish Medical Center in New Hyde Park and North Shore University Hospital in Manhasset are hosting the recruitment drive in conjunction with the Ida Da Silva Foundation, a New York City-based, non-profit organization dedicated to helping children with leukemia.

Bone marrow donors can participate by filling out consent forms, along with a medical questionnaire. Marrow donors need not give blood, hospital officials said. "All we need is a check swab from prospective donors. The whole thing takes about 15 minutes. That's 15 minutes to save a life," they declared.

Bone marrow donors must be admitted to a hospital for the procedure, the officials said. The donor is placed under anesthesia while doctors remove liquid marrow, which the body of a healthy donor can reproduce in four to six weeks.

Bone marrow stem cell transplants require matching tissue between the patient and the donor. Such tissue is inherited, but only 30 per cent of patients have bone marrow that is compatible with family members, creating a constant, urgent need for outside donors, said doctors at the North Shore/Long Island Jewish Bone Marrow Stem Cell Transplantation Program.

Patients who undergo transplants have their "sick" blood cells replaced with healthy cells from a matched donor. The transplanted cells attach themselves to the recipient's cells to form new, healthy blood cells in the patient, the doctors said.

Officials at North Shore University Hospital will conduct the first bone marrow stem cell drive on March 19 from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. in the hospital's Tower Conference Room 2, located at 300 Community Drive in Manhasset. A second drive is scheduled for March 20 at the Long Island Jewish Medical Center Staff House, Conference Room 306, at 270-05 76th Avenue in New Hyde Park.

For more information, visit www.Marrow.org or call 516-734-6907.

Jackson Heights, Elmhurst

Cops Ramp Up Gang War Probe

Police at the 110th and 115th Precincts are joining forces with the NYPD Gang Unit to stem a recent spike in violent attacks by Latino gang members, police sources said.

The sources said at least a dozen people were injured in gang-related attacks between February 8 and March 3, including three men who were stabbed by rival gang members on Elmhurst Avenue and 91st Street on February 26.

Police officials said they are confident the stepped-up enforcement will help "pull the plug" on gang violence in neighborhoods throughout Jackson Heights and Elmhurst.

Officials said in recent weeks police busted six known gang members who were charged in violent attacks on rival gang members.

Blood, Platelet Donations Needed

Officials at Community Board 3 in Jackson Heights issued an urgent plea recently for donations of blood and platelets required for leukemia treatments for board member Richard Cecere.

Cecere is currently receiving treatments as an inpatient at Memorial Sloan-

Kettering Cancer Center in Manhattan, where he requires transfusions of blood and platelets, doctors said.

Information on donor eligibility and the donation process can be obtained online at www.mskcc.org/blooddonations, or by calling Mary Thomas, coordinator of the Sloan-Kettering Blood Donor Program, at 212-639-3335. Thomas can also be reached online at thomasfin@mskcc.org

All designated donations of blood or platelets for Cecere must be made at the Blood Donor Room at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center at 1250 First Ave. between 67th and 68th Streets in Manhattan, entrance through the Schwartz Building Lobby.

All blood types are accepted, but appointments are necessary to make donations, Thomas said. Donations are regularly accepted on Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m., Thomas said.

Free parking is available for donors at the hospital garage at 66th Street and York Avenue. Donations of whole blood take approximately one hour, while platelet donations take about two hours, Thomas said.

Cecere, a long-time member of Community Board 3, was admitted for transfusions at Sloan-Kettering after suffering a recent setback, doctors said.

Community board officials said Cecere and his family would deeply appreciate donations of blood and platelets.

Any donations not required for Cecere's treatment would be released by the hospital for treatment of other patients, including pediatric patients, the doctors said.

Flushing

New Zoning Gets Nod

The City Council last week unanimously approved a rezoning plan for the Cedar Grove and Queensborough Hill neighborhoods in Flushing.

The rezoning plan is "designed to protect the integrity of existing low-density residential neighborhoods" in both communities, City Councilmember John Liu said.

The plan, which is immediately effective, received overwhelming support from City Council members who voted 49-0 for approval.

Fresh Meadows

DOT To Study 73rd Avenue 'Death Corridor'

City transportation officials last week announced plans to study a stretch of 73rd Avenue from 164th to 188th Streets in Fresh Meadows to determine if the installation of speed bumps or pavement markings will help slow traffic on the deadly strip.

Officials said the comprehensive study would likely take longer to complete than the 12-week studies conducted at other locations.

A spokesperson for the city Department of Transportation (DOT) said the agency had planned a study at 181st Street and 73rd Avenue. That plan was scrapped when local politicians and community activists called on the DOT to perform a more comprehensive study of traffic/pedestrian safety along the strip, the spokesperson said.

The local outcry followed the death of a 48-year-old father who was killed in a collision at 181st Street on February 25.

The 73rd Avenue corridor achieved notoriety

as a death trap when 11-year-old Vesean Alleyne was struck and killed by a drunk driver in October 2005 at an "unsignaled" intersection. John Wirta, 56, served only minimum time for killing Vesean and critically injuring his 14-year-old friend.

The incident led to the passage of "Vesean's Law", which mandates stiff penalties for drunk drivers who kill or critically injure pedestrians.

For more than two decades community activists have petitioned the city to install traffic-slowing devices along 73rd Avenue, a route used by motorists who want to avoid Union Turnpike and the Grand Central Parkway.

Flushing

Greek Man Leaves Island For Surgery In Queens

A 55-year-old Greek resident came home to Flushing last month, where he became the first patient to undergo a new treatment for prostate cancer.

When former Flushing resident Philip Gaitanis researched a procedure called brachytherapy, he discovered that doctors at New York Hospital of Queens (NYHQ) pioneered the treatment.

Gaitanis wasted no time contacting officials at the Flushing hospital, who arranged for Dr. Dattatreya Nori to perform the procedure on Gaitanis on February 21.

Nori, who serves as chairman of radiation and oncology at NYHQ, pioneered the use of radioactive Cesium-131 "seeds", placed into or near a tumor to kill off cancerous cells.

Gaitanis, who immediately returned to Queens to undergo the treatment, was able to leave the hospital several hours after the procedure. He has remained in Queens for follow-up by doctors at NYHQ, hospital officials said.

Nori is also Radiation Oncologist-In-Chief at New York Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Hospital in Manhattan.

Grand Central Parkway Lane Closures



During the period of March 12 through March 30, 2007, the New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT) will perform bridge work at the Steinway Street Bridge over the Grand Central Parkway (GCP). During this period, the contractor will utilize single and double lane closures on a nightly basis on the eastbound and westbound Grand Central Parkway. In addition, one lane in each direction of Steinway Street will be closed across both bridges. The schedule for these closures is as follows:

- GCP Eastbound and Westbound single-lane closure: 10 p.m. - 5 a.m.
- GCP Eastbound and Westbound two-lane closure: 12:01 a.m. - 5 a.m.
- Steinway Street N & S single-lane closure 10 p.m. - 5 a.m.

Ramps and Intermittent GCP Closures

•There will also be intermittent full closures scheduled for the Grand Central Parkway during portions of this period for steel beam erection. These closures will be limited to 15-minute durations and will take place between

the hours of 12 a.m. to 5 a.m. The anticipated dates for these intermittent closures are March 14 through March 16, for the eastbound Grand Central Parkway and March 21 through March 23 for the westbound Grand Central Parkway.

•The 33rd Street entrance ramp to the eastbound Grand Central Parkway will be closed during eastbound operations. The BQE entrance ramp to the westbound Grand Central Parkway will be closed during westbound operations. Traffic will be detoured along Astoria Boulevard North & South.

For more information, Visit the NYCDOT Web site at www.nyc.gov/dot, or contact Community Liaison, Nareesa Nabibaksh, at 718-932-8785 or via e-mail at nnabibaksh@zetlin.com. In an emergency, call the New York City Government Services and Information Hotline at 311.