

Husband Goes The Distance to Thank Those that Saved Wife

100 miles to mark wife's blood cancer journey

A dedicated husband will go the distance to mark his wife's blood cancer journey whilst raising awareness and funds to thank the charities that helped save her life.

On 4 June Patrick Byrnes, 45, from Warrington, Cheshire, will cycle the Tour de Manc, an open road, 100 mile ride travelling through all 10 Greater Manchester boroughs.

Patrick's wife, Nicola, **AGE**, was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia, in June 2015, she faced months of chemotherapy, at The Christie, Manchester, to get her into remission, so she could receive a blood stem cell transplant – which was her only lifesaving option.

The blood cancer charity, DKMS, found a blood cell stem donor match from Germany and in March 2016 Nicola received her transplant, at the Haematology and Transplant Unit, at the hospital.

As a thank you for helping save Nicola's life Patrick wanted a challenge to raise awareness and much needed funds for DKMS and HaTS (Haematology and Transplant Support), an independent charity which directly supports the patients and the families of the Haematology and Transplant unit.

Patrick said: "To say it changed our lives is an understatement - the hospital has been our second home and the medical team have saved my wife's life on multiple occasions. At times getting to the transplant seemed to be out of reach, an impossibility, and despite some very dark days we managed to get through it.

"If the donor hadn't signed up to be a potential lifesaver and without the brilliant support of DKMS and the medical team my wife wouldn't be here today. I wanted to do this challenge to raise awareness of blood cancer and how important it is to register as a potential blood stem cell donor - you could help give someone a second chance of life. I wanted to give something back to say thank you, so please donate to these two great charities."

Patrick who has been married to Nicola for **INSERT** years and will be doing the challenge with his friend Tom Beech, **AGE**, from **LOCATION**.

Miguel Leon, Head of Fundraising at DKMS said: “We are dedicated in helping the fight against blood cancer through the recruitment of blood stem cell donors. Nicola’s story is an example of how important it is for people to sign up to the DKMS register and we wish Patrick the best of luck with the challenge.”

Every 20 minutes someone in the UK is diagnosed with a blood cancer. Anyone aged between 17-55 and in general good health can register to become a potential lifesaver. Please join the DKMS register today by visiting dkms.org.uk/en/register-now

If you would like to support Patrick’s chosen charities, you can make a donation by visiting: mydonate.bt.com/fundraisers/ridefornicola

- End -

Contact:

For further information on DKMS, please contact Heather Fanning, PR & Communications Manager, on 020 8747 5642 or email Heather.Fanning@dkms.org.uk

For further information on HaTS, please contact the HaTS Charity coordinator, on 07921 852 783 or email thehatscharity@gmail.com

Notes to Editor:

About DKMS

- DKMS is a global not for profit organisation that started in Germany in 1991 around one family’s search for a donor. Dr. Peter Harf founded DKMS in honour of his wife Mechtild, who had sadly lost her battle with blood cancer. Peter promised his wife to help every blood cancer patient searching for a matching donor.
- To date, DKMS has registered seven million blood stem cell donors worldwide. Over 60,000 people around the world have received a potentially lifesaving blood stem cell donation through DKMS.
- Today DKMS operates in Germany, USA, Poland, Spain and the UK. DKMS is dedicated to the fight against blood cancer through recruiting stem cell donors and providing second chances at life; creating awareness of blood disorders and raising funds to match donor registration costs.
- DKMS seeks to improve blood cancer therapies via its own research carried out at its Clinical Trials Unit, located in Germany.
- DKMS launched in the UK in 2013. DKMS is the trading name of DKMS Bone Marrow Donor Centre, a registered charity in England and Wales (1150056) and Scotland (SC046917). DKMS is a limited company registered in England and Wales (08151279).

Blood stem cell donation

- There are more than 8,500 known HLA (human leukocyte antigen) tissue characteristics that can occur in thousands of combinations. The donor and patient must have at least eight HLA characteristics in common to be considered a match but ideally should have 10.
- If you match with someone who needs a blood stem cell donation, the two methods through which blood stem cells are collected are either: a donation of peripheral stem cells collected via the blood stream (around 90 per cent of donations are made this way) or a donation of bone marrow collected from the back of the pelvic bone (not the spine).

- Every 20 minutes, someone in the UK is diagnosed with a blood cancer like leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma (Cancer Research UK, 2014).
- Around 2,000 people in the UK cannot find a donor within their family (The Anthony Nolan & NHS Stem Cell Registry Annual Review 2016).
- There are over one million people registered as potential blood stem cell donors in the UK, who are registered with DKMS, Anthony Nolan and NHSBT (The Anthony Nolan & NHS Stem Cell Registry Annual Review 2016).
- While close to a quarter of potential donors in the UK are from minority ethnic backgrounds (The Anthony Nolan & NHS Stem Cell Registry Annual Review 2015), patients from these backgrounds continue to have difficulty in finding suitable donors due to a disproportionate lack of available donors (The Anthony Nolan & NHS Stem Cell Registry Annual Review 2016).

About HaTS

HaTS is a small, independent charity, whose overriding objective is to provide and improve upon the support and care provided to patients and families of the Haematology and Transplant Unit, situated in The Christie NHS Hospital.

Originally known as ALUPAL, the charity, celebrating 30 years of existence in 2016, helps patients and their families overcome some of the day to day challenges they encounter when faced with life threatening illnesses and periods of isolation. The funds raised by HaTS are used to:

- provide financial assistance to those patients and carers experiencing difficulties,
- provide complementary therapies to patients and carers alike, to help with the physical and emotional effects experienced as a result of a cancer diagnosis,
- purchase items to improve patients' experience and quality of life, for example newspapers whilst in isolation, adjustable chairs and other small items