

March 17, 2011

It has been a year now since I have had the blessing of donating my bone marrow. Many people consider me a hero for what I did, but I really don't think I really did that much except lie on a table and sleep while the doctors did all the work. What I am most proud of is that fact that I did give you and your family hope at such a difficult time. I have seen first-hand how frightening a new diagnosis can be and how the thought of a timeline to your life can shake you to your core. In my 2 years as a medical student at USC, I have seen what an illness can do and how hope for a recovery can dramatically change a patient's outlook. I pray that my bone marrow gave that hope for a better day to you and your family. It was not just the only thing I could do for you, but probably the best thing.

One of my friend's family went through the difficult process of finding a bone marrow match for their youngest son in 2007. A bone marrow transplantation gave them hope at a healthy future. Unfortunately, Evan lost his battle, but his family has made it their mission to give other families that same chance at a better tomorrow through bone marrow and live tissue donor registration drives. That is how I got signed up. I never thought I would get chosen, but I knew in my heart that if I was chosen, I would donate. I was put in the National Marrow Donor Program Registry in late 2008 and received a call in September 2009 telling me I was a preliminary match. Surprisingly, I actually got really nervous and had second thoughts about donating, but through investigating and prayer, I decided to go through with the testing. I ended up not being a perfect match for the first recipient, and I know that this was God preparing me to donate to you. In December 2009 while stuck in traffic in downtown Los Angeles, I received another call telling me that I was a match for you. Already going through the process, I knew what to expect and was actually excited at the thought of donating. Plus the fact that I was studying hematological disorders in class and my physician was one of my professors made it even more intriguing. I donated on March 17, 2010 and have since recovered fully. For how anxious I was when I received my first call, the entire process was better than I could have ever expected and I would do it again in a heartbeat.

This past year or more has been a terrible trial for you and your family. I pray that not only are you feeling better, but that you are stronger, emotionally and spiritually, than you were before your illness. This entire experience did not just affect you. It no doubt brought your friends and family closer. You gave me my first chance to save a life and gave me the courage and hope that I can do it for a living as a physician. You are such a brave woman to go through what you went through and I am honored to have my blood run through your veins.

Fight On!

Andy Gausepohl