Marshall students urged to support lifesaving efforts

By TALEIGH WHITE
STUDENT REPORTER

Marshall students are capable of saving lives, according to the local Marrow Donor Program.

NMDP is a global organization that helps those diagnosed with a form of blood cancer or disorder find a suitable donor for a stem cell transplant. Stem cell transplants are often called bone marrow transplants, but a bone marrow transplant is one specific type of stem cell transplant.

Jessie Pritchard, NMDP Member Recruitment Coordinator, said the organization works to "connect donors to recipients who need a life-saving stem cell or, in rare cases, a bone marrow transplant."

Most people who need a blood stem cell transplant are unable to find a match within their family and depend on NMDP to find a donor. This is why the organization works to connect donors to those in need.

The organization recruits at many college campuses, looking for donors between the ages of 18 and 35.

"We find that younger donors give our recipients a better chance of not only surviving, but thriving, which is why we're here at Marshall today," Pritchard said.

Marshall University NMDP chapter leader, Emily Price, said she joined the organization because it helped her receive a life-saving transplant as a child.

"NMDP was actually wonderful whenever I was going through my treatment, and they were the people who helped me get my transplant," Price said. "My donor was actually an unrelated match from Poland."

The organization isn't only looking for stem cell donors, but volunteers interested in donating their time.

"There's always an opportunity to connect with [or] join the chapter," Price said. "People who are dedicated to the mission can help volunteer and do more swabbing on campus."

Updates related to Marshall's NMDP chapter will be accessible on the Instagram page: mu_nmdpchapter.

For more information about the program, reach out to Emily Price, Marshall University NMDP Chapter Leader. at 304-784-9794 or Price444@marshall.edu or Jessie Pritchard, NMDP Member Recruitment Coordinator. Pritchard can be contacted at 412-804-1983 or jpritcha@nmdp.org.

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Provost Q&A

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Provost Diane Petrella (The Parthenon/Soleil Woolard)

It's also about, we create our own opportunities and that goes back to, you know, I went to music at Eastern Illinois. I didn't go to Juilliard. I didn't go to some really high level performance program, but I still was able to create those opportunities along the way because of how hard I worked and that's the key to me. Aligning to a community in a university that has that same passion and that mission of knowing that there's untapped potential in every single person. It's really about the opportunities and the hand up we give people at different moments in time that open doors and let people achieve. I think that's the mission that aligns with in terms of personally as well as what Marshall's trying to accomplish.

I think this next question is one of the most important ones for anybody who comes to West Virginia — have you had a pepperoni roll yet?

I've not had one in West Virginia yet. But, you know, my husband is from Pittsburgh, so I've had pepperoni rolls and they're actually not uncommon in Ohio, but I've not had a West Virginia one.

What was it like on your first day stepping onto Marshall's campus?

It was really warm. It was July 1. I will just say that everywhere I've gone, from the minute I've gotten here, everybody's very welcoming. You know, making sure that you're taken care of, making sure that everything is set up for you, that everybody's being really helpful. There was a culture on this campus of true care and respect that I think permeates all the work that we do. Walking in, it was really exciting. Of course, you're really nervous taking on a role this big. It's a big transition for me and it can be really overwhelming looking at everything, like all the people that report to you, all the colleges, all the structures and all of the expectations that people have, but I would say the more you spend time, the more you realize people are just people.

This is a great team here. There is great leadership on this campus, and everybody here is trying to make sure that you're successful. There's nobody that wants to undermine what you're doing or making it difficult, we're all rowing in the same direction. I think that's a strength of your leadership on this campus that the direction that Marshall is going in is very, very clear, which makes it really easy, in a sense, to kind of join that and make decisions because you know where you're going, right?

When decisions are aligned with your mission and your strategy and everything that Marshall represents, it kind of gives you a really strong sense of focus, so it's been a great experience joining this community, probably unlike any other institution I've worked at, and I mean that sincerely.

How does it feel to rock green again since your time in Northern Texas?

That's the best. Green is the best color. Everybody loves green.

If you had to give one message out to all students, what would it be?

That's a lot of pressure. I just really think that you can actually do whatever you put your mind to do. I think I'm an example of that, that you say, 'this is what I want to accomplish.' This is a community that's gonna rally around you and don't ever limit your aspirations, no matter what your background is, where you came from, the challenges you've had up to date. There are people around you that want to see you succeed and so take advantage of every single opportunity that comes your way. Don't be afraid to say yes.

As musicians, you often get asked to do things that maybe we're not so quite sure that we can do. I worked my way through 12 years of higher education and so I learned to say yes then figure out how to do it and that was a huge key to the success. It's the people that are afraid to grab the ring, or to take the next step, or to apply for a program, or go study abroad, or say, 'I want to go to graduate school,' or whatever it is. If you don't try and take the steps to move towards your goal, you'll never achieve the goal. It can seem really overwhelming when you're thinking about getting point a to point b, but if you just take each challenge as they come and never lose sight of where you hope to go — the sky's the limit.

What can we expect to see in the future of you as the provost?

I'm still formulating my plans, but to me, we're here for the students. Students are the most important aspect of this institution and that's who we're here to serve. We're really trying to support student success in every way we can. Through outstanding teaching, through great services, through clarity in how we navigate systems and structures and how do we really make sure that from start to finish, every student at Marshall has the support they need to navigate their journey successfully. So, wanting to increase our retention rates, increase our graduation rates, increase our career rates, all the things that President Smith is rallying around, we want to move the needle on that in a really positive way.

Read the full story online at marshallparthenon.com.

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ChiliFest returns to downtown Huntington

By MORGAN WATSON
STUDENT REPORTER

Downtown Huntington will be filled with the smell of chili, live music and competition on Oct. 17 as ChiliFest returns for another year of food, entertainment and fundraising.

ChiliFest is the West Virginia State Chili Championship and serves as a major fundraiser for the Ronald McDonald House. ChiliFest president Ron Smith said approximately 60 teams from across a five-state area will participate in the event.

Chili teams will compete in the International Chili Society competition for a chance to advance to the World Chili Championship. Alongside the competitive chili teams, community teams will compete in the People's Choice category, where they will sell chili samples to raise money for the Ronald McDonald House.

The community team that sells the most chili sample tickets and raises the most money for the House will receive the Golden Chili award and bragging rights for the year.

"Obviously the ICS teams that travel are very competitive as they are trying to vie for a spot in the World's Championship," Smith said.

The competition also continues among the community teams, with rivalries developing over the years. Smith said Cabell-Huntington Hospital and the Huntington Fire Fighters group are two teams that have developed a particular rivalry.

Beyond the chili competition, attendees can take part in several activities throughout the festival. The event will feature music from the Pullman stage, a Hot Pepper Eating Contest, a Shot n' Holler contest, a Beer Drinking Contest with a competitive twist and a Kids Corner for younger attendees.

While ChiliFest offers entertainment for the community, its fundraising impact stays a major part of the event. Smith said ChiliFest is the largest festival held in downtown Huntington and the largest annual fundraiser for the Ronald McDonald House.

Through chili sample ticket sales and the Victory Toyota truck raffle, ChiliFest raises more than $100,000 for the Ronald McDonald House in a single day.

Last year, the festival surpassed $1 million raised for the House throughout the event's history. Smith said organizers hope to continue building on that total this year.

The money raised helps support the Ronald McDonald House's operating budget and provides an important source of funding for the organization.

With dozens of teams competing, multiple activities for attendees and fundraising at the center of the event, ChiliFest will bring food, competition and the Huntington community together once again on Oct. 17.

For more information about ChiliFest, you can visit their website at https://chilifestwv.com.

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