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Jody Record
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Students To Conduct Bone Marrow Drive During UNH Hockey Game Feb. 27

Media Contact: [Jody Record](#)

603-862-1462

UNH Media Relations

Feb 22, 2010

DURHAM, N.H. – A bone marrow drive in 2009 resulted in a University of New Hampshire student being a match for a 60-year-old man with cancer. Giovanni's Team at UNH, the student group that hosted the testing, is hoping to score again with the bone marrow registry drive taking place during the UNH men's hockey game against Northeastern Saturday, Feb. 27, 2010, in Durham.

Organizers of the event are working with UNH Athletics to set up the testing site in the lobby of the Whittemore Center. Testing will begin at 5:30; the game starts at 7 p.m. The goal is to register 1,000 potential donors.

"I don't think that people realize how easy the registration process is; it's a five minute process that involves completing a one-page form and a painless cheek swab," says Marianne Fortescue, coordinator of special student programs in the Office of Community Service. "If you were to be a match and become a donor, you'll feel a little uncomfortable for a few days after the procedure but it's a small price to pay for saving a life."

Giovanni's Team at UNH was founded to help find a bone marrow match for now 3-year-old Giovanni Guglielmo of Belmont who, at 5 months, was diagnosed with a rare immune deficiency disorder known as NEMO, an x-linked chromosomal disorder.

While a match for the ill child was not found, doctors were able to do the transfusion when a cord blood donor was located. Giovanni underwent a successful transfusion at Boston Children's Hospital.

"We hope to register at least a 1,000 people on Saturday. It will be our first drive since we found out we had our first match/donor from UNH," says UNH junior Lynette Boutin, cofounder of Giovanni's Team at UNH that, to date, has hosted eight bone marrow drives and registered 500 potential donors.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling more than 12,200 undergraduate and 2,200 graduate students.