



The Sunflower Fund
Hope begins with you

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT STEM CELL DONATION DURING BLOOD DONOR MONTH

[30 May 2018] The month of June is commemorated as national blood donor month with the highlight being World Blood donor day on 14 June.

Blood is essential for good health. It makes up around 7% of the weight of a human body and is an incredibly important bodily fluid that transports oxygen and various nutrients to our body's cells. The body depends on a steady supply of fuel and oxygen to reach its billions of cells. Even the heart couldn't survive without blood flowing through the vessels that bring nourishment to its muscular walls.

Most people do not think about the function and importance of blood until something happens that causes them to need a blood transfusion or until they or someone close to them is diagnosed with a blood disease.

In the latter instance, sometimes the only hope of survival is a stem cell transplant, however finding a match is exceptionally challenging especially given the fact that there is only a 30% chance of finding a match with a family member. Finding a matched unrelated donor might be someone's only hope of survival and you might just be that match.

The Sunflower Fund is the premier organisation in Southern Africa that actively recruits stem cell donors, create awareness about the need for and the process involved in being a stem cell donor and raises funds for the tissue-typing cost of R3000 per individual to register as a donor.

"One of our very critical goals is to ensure that the Sunflower Fund's stem cell registry is an ethnically diverse source of potential stem cell donors, who are committed to help save lives", says Alana James CEO at The Sunflower Fund.

"It is therefore important for us to use opportunities like **blood donor month** to dispel some myths around stem cell donation, raise awareness and recruit donors", she continued.

One of the common myths is that if you are a blood donor or an organ donor, you are automatically registered as a stem cell donor, however this is not the case.

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PO Box 31163 Tokai 7966 Cape Town, South Africa
Office 106B Richmond Centre, 174-206 Main Road, Plumstead, 7800
Telephone: 021 701 0661 • Fax: 021 701 6790 • e-mail: info@sunflowerfund.org.za

Regional offices: Johannesburg and Durban

Directors: J Sedgwick (Chairman), Dr M. du Toit, B. Jessop, Dr L. Mpuntsha, Y. Naidoo,
Prof. R Ramesar, D. Walker **CEO:** Alana James

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“Through the recruitment of blood stem cell donors we provide the hope of life to individuals diagnosed with Leukaemia and other blood diseases whose only hope of recovery is a stem cell transplant”, she added.

A blood stem cell transplant can be a potentially life-saving treatment for more than 70 different diseases. More than 50,000 patients worldwide receive transplants every year, and this number continues to rise.

Blood diseases are not partial to race, age or gender. There are patients as young as 4 months old currently in search of a match in South Africa. Individuals have a better chance of finding a match within the same ethnic background as themselves. As such people from all backgrounds are encouraged to become donors.

“If you are in general good health, between the ages of 18- 45 years and have a BMI of less than 40, make a decision today to be the hope for someone and contact The Sunflower Fund to find out more about stem cell donation”, James continued.

You can also help The Fund with financial contributions to assist the fundraising efforts for the tissue-typing test costs and the patient support fund. Visit www.sunflowerfund.org.za to make a quick and easy cash donation. For more information or to register please contact The Sunflower Fund on toll-free number: 0800 12 10 82.

About The Sunflower Fund:

The Sunflower Fund is a South African Non-Profit Company (NPC) that is part of a global network of registries, dedicated to creating awareness, educating the public, recruiting blood stem cell donors and maintaining a registry of committed donors. The Sunflower Fund pays for the cost of the tissue-type testing. This is fundamental to saving the lives of South Africans who need a stem cell transplant. The chance of finding a matching donor is 1 in 100,000 – and as ethnic origin plays a significant role in the search for a donor, South Africa’s rainbow nation is at a distinct disadvantage, requiring a large pool of prospective donors.

Should you wish to become a donor, support one of the fundraising projects or make a financial contribution, please contact The Sunflower Fund on toll-free number: 0800 12 10 82. Visit www.sunflowerfund.org.za to learn more or look out for the DONATE button to make a cash donation via the website.

ISSUED BY: THE SUNFLOWER FUND

Media Contact: Kim Webster

kim@sunflowerfund.org.za

Tel: 021 701 0661

Cell: 082 227 5209

Toll free: 0800 12 10 82

Office 106B Richmond Centre, 174-206 Main Road, Plumstead, 7800



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