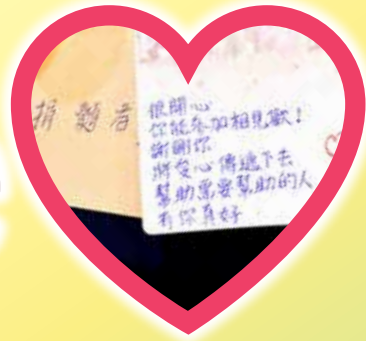


Love Follows Like a Shadow



The 2019 Reunion & 26th Anniversary of Buddhist Tzu Chi Stem Cells Center

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This is a time of gratitude and tears!

There is a kind of love that is destined like a shadow - whenever and wherever!

On the 19th and 20th of October 2019, the BTCSCC (Buddhist Tzu Chi Stem Cells Center) held a certificate program in the Jingsi Hall at Tzu Chi's Taichung branch for its twenty-sixth anniversary. This annual reunion between donors and donees started at 12:30 pm on the nineteenth this year. There were eight couples (donor

and donee) at the reunion. People came from as far as Liaoning Province (China); and the ages of the participants ranged between twenty-five and sixty-five. One donor postponed plan to bear child, some dedicated to their family members who suffered from leukemia, while others simply wanted to make a difference. A patient who successfully paired with another person's similar genetic makeup and regaining life thereafter is truly one of humanity's most beautiful miracle.



The 2019 reunion of the Buddhist Tzu Chi Stem Cells Center was held in the Jingsi Hall in Taichung. Eight donor and donee pairs participated, and representatives from each hospital also arrived to witness the miracle of life.

The Joy of Rebirth

“I am here because of your kind love.” Recipient Zheng Xukai, 30, used to work as a barber. However, when he was twenty-two, he had a high fever with no signs of receding after catching a cold. His skin was tinted and inflamed with bruises, his left eye vision began to deteriorate, and he could not breathe after climbing stairs. After visiting the Tri-Service General Hospital, he was diagnosed with severe aplastic anemia.

His family could not find compatible bone marrow donor so they sought help from Tzu Chi's bone marrow database. In February of 2013, he was able to receive a transplant. After the rebirth, his mental state, blood type, and body witnessed a change for the better. Afterwards, he became a new father. At the reunion, he joyfully thanked his donor for a new life and the opportunity to nurture his son.

Zheng seldom fell ill; his diagnosis was a jolt from lightening, especially for his parents who shed many tears for their eldest son. His father worried that



Zheng Xukai's mother (fourth from the right) said to Lan Sanliang (center), "You are our benefactor! While I could not do anything, you saved our entire family!"



After the reunion event, a tea session was held. Lan Sanliang (Second from the right), watched Zheng Xukai bottle feed his son, awed by the beauty of life. His donation of bone marrow not only revived a life but also produced another.

father and son would not have much time together, so he would frequently pray to the Buddha, and became so stressed that he was hospitalized due to a cardiac arrest. Zheng used to be rebellious and often argued with his parents. While he was in the hospital, his parents always needed to make arduous trips to the hospital to visit him, and he felt the burden and wanted to give up therapy. Finally, a donor came to his rescue for a second chance for life. After a successful marrow transplant, Zheng happily married his girlfriend, and she gave birth to a son in May of 2019.

After the transplant, Zheng's weight rose from a staggering forty kilograms to seventy-three kilograms, so his family guessed that his donor was also of a robust figure. As expected, Lan Sanliang was a towering man. When he appeared on the stage with his mother and two children, Zheng's father was speechless, and Zheng's mother gratefully referred to him as Zheng's "life savior". Lan Sanliang claims that he was incredibly lucky himself. When he was notified that there was a patient with compatible genetic information waiting for a transplant, he thought, "I can finally make a difference in someone's life!"

The Ordeal of an Illness at a Young Age, Increasing the Meaning of Life thereafter

Jiang Hanwei, the youngest of the recipients, was accompanied by his grandmother, mother, and sister when he met with donor Chen Yingxiu and her family. When Jiang was a student at the National Taiwan Normal University at 18, red spots began to appear on his back. His mother thought he had gotten a rash which healed in three to four days. Once, he was hit in the mouth while playing softball and his gums was bleeding. The dentist checked his mouth and began cleaning the affected area but it would not stop bleeding. After being rushed to



the ER, he was diagnosed with aplastic anemia, a condition when the body is unable to produce blood cells on its own. He had to have blood injections every two days. After a successful transplant, he is now twenty-five years old. No one was happier than his grandmother, Lin Sumei. Back then, she was a commissioner in the Taoyuan division of Tzu Chi and a recycling volunteer. When her grandson fell ill, she was incredibly stressed. Now that she had her healthy grandson back, she felt very blessed.

Lin Lizhu, Jiang’s mother explained excitedly while overcoming with gratitude, “We were incredibly lucky. Seven people were matched with my son but four of them were willing to donate. At that point, we left the final decision in the doctor’s hands. We trusted that the doctor would choose the most suitable donor!” Lin believed that karma from her daily kindness and merit reciprocated to her son. At the reunion, Lin could not wait to get a hold of the microphone and thank Chen for her kind deed, which allowed her son to pursue studies.

When Chen Yingxiu registered with the bone-marrow database, she was only a student, and it was not until she was a mother with two children before she was notified of her successful pairing. Because of her children, she worried about her health post-transplant. Her mother also objected to her choice,



Jiang Hanwei’s (upper left corner) friends came to visit him when he was hospitalized. Two of his friends even accompanied him when his head was shaved to provide moral support.



After his transplant, Jiang Hanwei (second from the left) participated in the 2018 worldwide bone marrow donors’ event.

but her husband, Huang Qinghui, did not wish anyone else to lose a family member like how he lost his brother-in-law who failed to find a match for marrow donor. He encouraged his wife to save the patient while she could.

Jiang read from his own letter to his “sister”. “I must be your long lost family! Your blood flows in my veins, and we were able to find each other in the midst of this large world. It must be fate

for me to be connected to you by 10 c.c. of your blood...” This connection of blood tied two families together and allowed life to continue. After recovering from his illness, the young Jiang sighed in realization, “Life is like a tea egg; it must be cracked for the flavor to seep through. I must thank you for your help. You are the luckiest person on earth...”

Jiang said to Chen, “We are like a pair of long-lost siblings. I already have two older sisters, and now I have one more!” Chen grasped her brother’s hand and replied in the same sentiment, “We are. My mother has three daughters; she’ll be glad to have another son.”

Empathy for Cancer Patient - Bone Marrow Replicates Happiness

Happiness can indeed be replicated. All donors are replicators of happiness.

In 2019, BTCSCC released a new book, titled, “The Cells of Love”. One of the patients described in the book is Li Yani, who also appeared in the 2018 reunion. Ten years ago, she was lucky enough to be paired with a donor, and her parents, sister, husband, and mother-in-law were accompanying through this obstacle of life. She attributes her



Jiang Hanwei said to Chen Yingxiu, “We are like a long-lost pair of siblings. I already have two older sisters, and now I have one more!” Chen Yingxiu was delighted that she had contributed to society by saving a hardworking student.



eventual conception of twins to her donor, who was able to bring her such happiness. She wished to replicate this happiness and repay her donor, while giving support to those still trapped with illnesses.

While a patient needs the support and care of family members, people who volunteer to take action and register in the database as donors are also essential to bringing happiness to leukemia patients and spreading love around the world.

After his wife recovered from lymphoma, Lin decided to repay by becoming a donor after a week of consideration, allowing Lin Genliang, an accompanying volunteer, to rest assured. At the same time, the ripples of kindness continue to spread and increase in size, one kind act at a time. The recipients bring this love to the hospital to cheer patients.

After a Near Death Experience, Paying Forward

Chen Sujing recalled her experiences with chemotherapy: constant nausea, a jarring pain in her throat even when she swallowed her saliva because of ulcers in her oral cavity, and being prohibited from eating solid foods. This never-ending cycle of crying, eating, and throwing up took an even larger toll on her health

as she dragged her weak body around the room in an attempt to exercise. Eight months after the transplant, she was hospitalized due to a fever, rashes on her skin, and pain in her thighs and



It was only when they met that Chen Sujing learned donor Lin Hongzhi had his personal experience caring for his wife, who is also a cancer survivor. She thanked Lin dearly for his act of kindness.



Two years after her transplant, Chen Sujing volunteered in the Tzu Chi Bone Marrow Support Group to visit patients, clearing confusion by sharing her own experience.

buttocks, and even taking a single step was incredibly difficult.

Two years after her transplant, she joined Tzu Chi's Bone Marrow Support Group to visit patients, sharing her own experience during her illness to clear any possible confusion in the patients' minds. Her parents worried about her health, urging her to refrain from volunteering until she had fully recovered. However, she felt the urge to do the right thing. She said, "In 2016, my father passed away from a tough battle with cancer. While I grieved for his death, I was also thankful for my donor for putting me in decent health to assist my father through his last days."

A Single Transplant Ended a 20-year-long Blood Transfusion

"When I heard that my husband only had six months left, I did not know what to do, especially because my two children were still young. I cried every day after hearing that news." Zhang Guozhen's wife held back tears as she spoke of how he was diagnosed with aplastic anemia at 33 and the mental suffering she experienced as a result. Many of their family members strongly encouraged both of them to live on, and she constantly prayed for her husband's health, thinking, "As long as I can see my two children growing up as adults, I have



Zhang Yuhao (second from the right), Zhang Guozhen's son, clutched donor Li Zhiheng's hand emotionally and said, "I cannot thank you enough for what you did. Back then, both my father and sister were ill. If you were not here, I would have lost two members of my family."

no regrets to leave the world with my husband."

When Zhang was fifty-eight, he was struck by acute myeloid leukemia, and the doctor announced that he only had four months left. As his bone marrow was not producing blood cells after chemotherapy, so the doctors attempted blood transfusions. He went from visiting



the hospital every month to every half-a-month. At the end, a blood transfusion could not even last him a week. There was no alternative but a bone marrow transplant.

The Struggle with Illness and the Loss of a Daughter

When Zhang had finally met a compatible bone marrow donor, there was internal bleeding in his skull and a general lack of blood platelets, so he was not in a good shape for the transplant procedure. At the same time, his daughter, who was a nurse, was diagnosed with a brain tumor. Suddenly, a family was hit with two members going down; they had no choice but to start

saving the daughter first.

The hospital personnel did their best to maintain Zhang's health, but the donor had to delay the procedures due to some personal matters. This worried Zhang, as his only hope of survival was about to slip out of his fingers. After six months, when the marrow arrived, his doctor asserted, "If I can get you into the surgery room, I can get you out alive!" This increased Zhang's confidence significantly.

It was also confidence that guided the Zhang family through the three months of the post-operative life. Although there were many dangers along the way, the love that accompanied helped him to persist through all difficulties. Zhang's wife recalled the time that she took care of him, "Every time he had a fever, his whole body would turn red. He received IV after IV to avoid infections. He was wrapped with so many bandages that he looked like a mummy and frequently had an upset stomach. His skin would also peel off in layers..."

When the withered leaves fall, fresh leaves will sprout in their place. Watching her husband being healthy and strong, Mrs. Zhang thought, "My husband's savior must be tall and strong, because his healthy cells changed my husband's health for the better."



Li Zhiheng postponed their plan of in vitro fertilization and reached a consensus with his wife, "We will temporarily pause our plan. I need to save a life first!"

Save a Life or Create a Life? The Ultimate Dilemma

The spotlight followed the robust figure of Hsinchu computer engineer Li Zhiheng and his wife onstage. At this sight, Mrs. Zhang could not contain her emotions and wrapped them in a tight hug, while Zhang said gratefully, “I cannot thank you two enough for what you did. Back then, both my father and sister were ill. If you were not here, we would have lost two members of our family.” After two surgeries and various other means of therapy, Zhang’s daughter could not be saved and passed away in November of 2018, leaving a wound on the Zhang family’s hearts. Although she was not as lucky as her father, host Chen Zhuqi comforted him, “Your daughter is watching from the heavens and will be incredibly happy. Your recovery is your best gift for her.”

“Everything is worth it! I am delighted that you are back in full health and that I have done my part to save a life.” Li registered in the database back in 2003, and it took ten years for him to be granted the chance to rescue a patient.

However, the timing of this notification was a bit inconvenient for Li because he had always wanted a child. He and his wife were attempting in-vitro fertilization, and his wife had already gotten ovulation induction injections. At



When Wang Qicheng fell ill, his son was only six months old. In fear that his son would be fatherless, he recorded his congratulation to his son on his twentieth and thirtieth birthday.

the end, he reached a consensus with his wife, saying, “Let’s postpone our plans. Saving a life is the top priority!”

When the truth about the delay was revealed, Mrs. Zhang gazed at the two reluctantly, “I’m sorry for causing such an inconvenience!” Zhang pointed to his vest and added, “I’m sorry that you had exchanged your plan with my life.” Li did not seem to mind, as he believed that they still had chances for a child. He added, “There are no severe repercussions to donating bone marrow. Please believe this. Helping another person is a very rewarding experience. If you have the chance, do help.”

The Family - the One Thing Worth Fighting for

Wang Qicheng was 39 years old when he was diagnosed with leukemia. Back then, his third eldest sister was also fighting lymphoma. He thought, what would his family like if he could not be there to raise his six-month-old son? He recorded his last words in video so that his son could see the message when he grows up. Fortunately, this video never served its purpose. Wang was lucky enough to receive a donation and survived this ordeal. Huang Yahui, his wife, was ecstatic and grateful, as she would take her child from Yunlin up north every weekend to see her husband.

Reflecting on his difficult days, Wang said, “Some say that there is nothing worth living for, but I need something to motivate me to fight!” His son was only six months old when Wang fell ill, and his greatest fear was not able to raise his son who definitely noticed the love during those days. “Whenever I go see him, he seems to be always in pain, but he manages to smile at me brightly.” Although he was young, he still remembered the warm love swimming in his father’s eyes. “It was like he was trying to tell me that he loved me so much!” Now that their family was preserved, Wang’s wife said, “We can live happily together now. Back then, I could not even think what would happen the next day.”

Upon meeting his father’s savior, Wang and his mother kneeled down in gratitude, refusing to rise. The audiences were tearful at the scene.



I Must Save Him!

The donor is Huang Baoqing, the youngest of all the donors present. Upon seeing their savior, Wang's wife, with her son in tow, fell on their knees in gratitude. Huang kneeled down too apologetically, saying, "Please, don't!" When notified of a successful pairing, Huang told himself, "I must save this person! I must give them hope and not put them down!" He told the guests at the reunion that helping others in need is not as painful as it seems. With one small act, one can help an entire family in peril.

Coincidentally, both Huang Baoqing and Wang Qicheng pursued a career in finance and economics. With a simple and harmless donation of bone marrow, a family could be saved, the quality of a life could be persevered, and a new cycle of kindness continues.

Struck by Lymphoma, Rebirth in the midst of Desperation

When Liu Junming was twenty-six years old, he went to the hospital because of a constant pain under his armpit. There, he was diagnosed with lymphoma. After two years of chemotherapy, his illness showed no signs of slowing, so he had no choice but to get help from Tzu Chi's Stem Cell



With Huang Baoqing's determinations to save a life, these two were able to meet today. During tea time, they assured each other, "From now on, we are brothers!"



Both donor Tian Jiaqi and donee Liu Junming are not particularly outgoing people, but they both appreciate each other with blessing and gratitude.

Database and was fortunate enough to receive a compatible donation a year later. "When I saw that packet of blood travelling into my body, I thought to myself, my new life is here!" When he saw his savior, the normally shy Liu gave his donor a huge hug.

Before donating, 33 year-old Tian Jiaqi realized that he had high blood pressure, so he did his best to adjust his diet and took medicine to control his blood pressure. With this donation,



The volunteers involved in the donations were also at the reunion, enjoying the moment that new lives were made.

both the donor and the recipient became healthier. Donor Tian said, “People are connected together by fate. Since it is good intention, I should utilize the opportunity to help more people and keep the cycle of kindness going. If I have the ability to give another a second chance, why should I not give them this chance?”

Living the second half of his life with the blood of a stranger is the best way for Liu to repay his donor’s act of kindness. As Liu said, “All of my suffering is in the past! Now I just have to live in the present, starting from today.”

Donation of a Head Nurse Rescued a Family

The onset of leukemia almost split a forty-year-long couple. Lu Qiue, now 61, was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia six years ago, during which the entire family was living in a dark shadow. Chen Xingnong, her husband, was prepared to spend all the family savings to save his wife. When Lu was hospitalized, her children resigned from their jobs to care for her around the clock. Perhaps heavens were touched

by such dedication and helped her locate a compatible donor, preserving her family. Chen's daughter said, "We would disinfect the entire bathroom before use. After use, we would disinfect the bathroom again. However, not long afterward, she would need to use it again, but we still disinfected accordingly. Every single one of us did the same routine."

After Lu's recovery, she frequently cooked and was livelier than ever before. Chen joked, "A young thirty-year-old woman gave her the bone marrow, so I tell her that she is like thirty-year old with bad temper."

Donor Cheng Qiurong was a Tzu Ching and registered in the database back then. After she became a nurse, she forgot about this matter until she was notified that she was a matched donor for a patient in need. "I thought the donation process was not that worrisome. I was fairly healthy back then, and a simple blood donation was sufficient. Besides, a compatible donor is extremely difficult to come by, so I am incredibly honored to become a donor."

Cheng is a mother of two, and her youngest daughter was not even a year old at the time. She said her daughter considers her mother a superhero



Recipient Lu Qiue was in tears when she saw her donor Cheng Qiurong, and she could not stop thanking her.



because of what she had done. “Medical technology is more advanced nowadays. Bone marrow cells can now be filtered out from a blood donation. In the past, bone marrow cells had to be extracted from the pelvic bone, which was less convenient and painful.” Now that she has heard of the Chen family’s sufferings, she felt that all she had done was worth it.

Worry about Foreign Marriage and Death - Saved by Her Brother in Taiwan

Recipient Zhao Hongyan was case number 3612 from Liaoning Province. When she walked on stage, she was in tears: “It’s been five years. I miss my brother! Where are you? I’ve been hoping to meet you for over five years!” Despite not knowing the details of her case, the audience burst into tears at this sight. She cried, “I am an only daughter! I’m afraid of marrying off to a foreign land, and I’m afraid of dying! Only stem cells could save me!”

In November of 2013, Zhao was a teacher at the middle school affiliated to Liaoning University when she was hospitalized because of flu. She was then diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia. Her family found a compatible donor through the China Marrow Donor Program, but reneged after six months. The entire family was drained of options.

Her father was willing to trade a life for a life and donate his own bone marrow, but he was worried that his old age of 66 would not allow him to yield normally active bone marrow. Her mother could not take such a loss and was diagnosed with ovarian cancer two months later. The whole family instantly crumbled. Everyone needed to take sleeping pills to fall asleep every night, and sometimes people would awaken in the middle of the night and cry. Her father borrowed money from family members everywhere to afford his daughter’s hospital fees. One year, in the depth of winter, he rode his bike through the cold outdoors while crying. His tears drenched his face



In 2014, the Zhao family had moved to Beijing in an attempt to seek treatment and take care of Zhao Hongyan, while her father tried to gather money in Dalian.



Zhao Hongyan embraced Lin Zheqian's mother and cried, "Mother!" Lin Zheqian's mother replied humbly, "We are incredibly lucky to be able to help you!" (Picture taken by Liao Weichen)

mask and froze into ice as he asked the heavens, "Why is my life so difficult?"

Later on, a compatible donor was found through Tzu Chi's Stem Cells Database. On July 9, 2014, she received the transplant. As the bright red blood was transferred into her body, a ray of sunshine seemed to shine through the family, and smiles began to emerge on their faces. When she found out that the donor was two years older than her, Zhao Hongyan told her son that his veins were flowing with the blood of a "Taiwan uncle".

To meet her "brother", she and her entire family traveled from Dalian to Xiamen. However, because they did not have a visa, they could not travel to Taiwan. However, Zhao Hongyan was not willing to give up yet. She wrote a letter to Tzu Chi, and the two were finally able to meet today. When she saw Lin

Zheqian, her savior, show up before her eyes, she bowed kowtowed three times and rushed to embrace him. The audience was touched and embraces in an ocean of tears at this sight.

Lin admitted shyly, "I used to fear thinking about the outcome of my donation because I would be devastated if the transplant failed!" Zhao walked up to Lin's mother and embraced her passionately, crying, "Mother!" Upon the adding of a new family member, Mother Lin replied humbly, "It is us that are lucky enough to be granted the chance to help a person! I cannot thank Master Cheng Yen enough for this opportunity!" Zhao also brought her family portrait and told Lin, "I locked your card for me in a safe. Thank you for saving our entire family (including my parents)!"

Ever since The Buddhist Tzu Chi Stem Cells Center was established



in 1993, four-hundred and forty-four thousand people have registered in the database, and 5,471 successful donations and delivered to 31 countries/nations to save life. Such inspiring statistics have truly proven that Taiwan is a country full of love. The Buddhist Tzu Chi Stem Cells Center still continues to advocate registering in the database, for one extra 10 c.c. of blood can increase the chances of a patient being saved.

Two strangers with similar genetic DNA were able to meet in this vast world of people due to fate, allowing a leukemia patient to earn a second chance at life! It was due to Master Cheng Yen's call

of action in 1993, "Saving a life does no harm to the body", that over five thousand families are preserved. This love will forever be preserved in the hearts of the donors and recipients.



The reunion of donors and recipients brought out tears of joy in the volunteers.