This story posted by: **Sheila Palmer Aardema**

I had my transplant Sept 1990; I received my oldest sister’s bone marrow. My children were all home, five of them, and ranged from 19-8 yrs. We prayed that we could just get them through school. And now it has been 21 GREAT years. My husband stood by me, through mean and ugly, and he is my hero. All my children graduated from college, married, and I just got my 18th grandchild. My youngest son was so impressed with the doctors saving his mom, he became one and is in his second year if residency. We would not have chosen this lesson to help us cherish life, but we would not be the people we are today without it. Thanks for giving us the opportunity to live these special years.

This story posted by: **Nashmia Al-Nashmi**

Dear Legacy for Life organizers at Fred Hutch! Thank you for inviting me to to this remarkable reunion! I’m proud to be among the survivors who surpassed a great deal of hardship but thank god and thanks to everyone at Fred Hutch who instilled faith, hope and persistence that strengthened my will to get through. After undergoing a successful bone marrow transplant in November 27th of 1995, I felt another breath of life and a surge of happiness to go back to my country Kuwait for my 3 kids who I thought I’d never see again. I must admit that the emotional and physical side effects after the transplant were indeed tough. However, when I recalled all the friendly faces who kept me intact and put a smile on my face and knowing that it could have been worse kept me stronger and strengthened my faith in god and in myself that my purpose is to be a survivor and get past those hard times! Thanks to Dr. Mary Rose, Dr. Paul Martin, Nurse Phyllis, Nurse Tania and I’m sorry for the names I cannot recall at this present moment but you have made a huge and positive impact in my recovery and my family is evermore supportive and thankful for my renewed presence in their life. Sorry I cannot attend the reunion but I will be there in spirit for I’ll be taking a ride down memory lane with all my fellow survivors! Thank you all! Yours Sincerely Nashmia
This story posted by: **Charlene Anderson**

I was 50 years old when I was told I was very ill. I started chemo right way. Then just before I was to start the third round of chemo I was told by Fred Hutch that I could have a bone marrow transplant and have a cure. I choose the cure. It was the hardest job I ever had to do. I had diarrhea for three years. Eating was hard. I would get so sick to my stomach that I would get sores in my throat. But it wasn't until it was close to my 5th year of recovery that I saw how hard my illness hurt my love ones. It was very hard on them to see me that ill. I love my kids and Wilbert very much and will never be able to repay them for all they did for me will I was ill. I am who I am today because you where there when I needed you.

This story posted by: **Vincent Arduin**

We commemorate some anniversaries more than others, either because they are first, or signify an important passage in our lives, or simply celebrate endurance, which of course is no simple matter for any of us who have survived a life-threatening illness. This December will mark the 25th anniversary of my bone marrow transplant for AML, with my only sister as my donor. Last summer I celebrated my 25th wedding anniversary with my wife and two daughters, ages 10 and 13. The arc of my adult life has been inextricably linked to what occurred on December 29, 1986. I feel profound gratitude to be alive, to have received the compassionate and knowledgable care of the Fred Hutch staff, as well as the persistent and enduring love of my family and friends. I also feel profound humility at the losses we have all experienced, the changes, and the unpredictable direction that life has taken.

This story posted by: **Howard Bachtel**

I was diagnosed with acute myelogenous leukemia December, 1988 by routine bloodwork; I had never been sick. I was immediately hospitalized and underwent aggressive chemotherapy. My parents and brothers moved to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania for much of 1989 from Missouri, Wyoming and Colorado. My wife is a nurse; she took a leave of absence and stayed almost 24/7 the 140 days of 1989 that I was hospitalized. My only hope was a bone marrow transplant but my two brothers were not close enough matches. My data was entered into the new National Marrow Donor Registry; I was told there was only a 1 in 20,000 chance of an unrelated match. There were only 15,000 in the registry. Nine months later they found a perfect match and we all headed to Seattle. I relapsed for the second time enroute there. The "Hutch" significantly downgraded my prognosis; I was told to consider the leukemia history if I could survive to one year after transplant. I'm very blessed; February was 21 years since transplant. After ten years of preferring to remain anonymous, my donor established contact with us. Vince lives only 165 miles away. We're truly “friends for life” and get together several times a year.
Howard Bachtel continued: My wife and I volunteer with the Pittsburgh chapter of the Leukemia Society and are privileged to help other patients and families in need. Thanks to the grace of God and to my doctors and nurses in Pittsburgh and on 11SW of Swedish Hospital entrusted with my care, I'm one of God's many miracles. My life has been back to normal for 20 years; I'm very aware that every day is truly a gift.

This story posted by: Teresa Banaszak

As a result of a routine physical examination, my marvelous internist here in Denver, Michelle Velkoff, MD, noticed an abnormality in my blood test results. After a confirming visit to a nephrologist and an hematologic oncologist, I was diagnosed with multiple myeloma in April, 2001. After much deliberation and subsequent research, my physicians determined that an autologous stem cell transplant was the next step after the initial drug intervention. Our research also indicated that SCCA was the best healthcare facility for the transplant. We arrived in Seattle and the "Hutch" September, 2002 - my transplant day was October 28, 2002. We left Seattle and returned to Denver to celebrate Christmas, 2002. This year will be my 9th anniversary. How does one express appreciation to such a great group of health care providers? I recall JoAnne Rochester, RN - Peter Johnson, PA - Courtney Barry, Scheduler - Sandra Olson, RN (University of Washington Hospital) - and of course, William Bensinger, MD and Oliver Press, MD. There were many other team members whose names I unfortunately can't recall. All of the members of the "Aqua" health care team were integral in my recovery. I do owe my good health to their expertise, care and devotion to their patients. I thank God each day for my continuing good health, the wonderful team at SCCA and above all, my caregiver and husband, Stan . . . my life has been a blessing!

Teresa and Stan Banaszak

Photos:
Teresa and Stan Banaszak

Going Home! Teresa and Courtney Barry, Scheduler

Going Home! Teresa and Joanne Rochester, RN

Going Home! Teresa and Members of the "Aqua" team
As an Assistant Principal at Garfield H.S. I broke up a girl-girl fight in the Spring of 2001, wrenched my back, went to my doctor who wanted an X-ray and the rest is history: no back injury, but my spleen was way oversized; doctor asked for me to go to the ER Swedish Ballard for a CAT scan and lab; Got a call asking me to see a specialist the next Tuesday, then a call moving the appoint up a day, walked into the medical office and saw the words "Oncology/Hemology" for the first time. A bone marrow biopsy and aspiration later and the verdict: MANTLE CELL LYMPHOMA, Stage IV. Started Chemo next morning. Nine rounds later, after losing 50 lbs, was given 18 months to live. Retired with the retirement goal of beating cancer. In three different contexts I was told by three different people there was someone I needed to meet: Oliver Press, FHCRC. Met him. He recommended an autologist stem-cell transplant. One nano-second later I decided to do it. The ride through was a doozie, but here I am, the lone survivor of four of us that received our transplants on December 4, 2002. Then I was asked by the Leukemia/Lymphoma Society to be an inspirational Speaker at Team InTraining Kick-off Sessions for groups doing fundraising marathons/triathalons. During the second season I decided to put my feet where my mouth was and signed up to do a half-marathon in San Diego, June, ‘07. As I approached the half-marathon point I kept thinking about the stem-cell transplant: I didn't do a half-stem-cell transplant; it was a full transplant. Went on to do the 26.2. Have done four TNT marathons and preparing for the 5th in the Fall. Crossing the Finish Line, San Diego, 2007, with Cheryl Chow and Sarah Morningstar who did their first marathon in 2001 dedicated to me while I was going through chemo.

Our daughter Emily was born with ALL and the only treatment option was a transplant. The doctors and staff at Childrens got and kept her cancer in remission until she was 6 months old and could recieve a bone marrow transplant from her soon to be 2 year old sister. The transplant was a challenge but she is now 7 and 3/4 years old and loving life. She is in her fourth remission and still fighting cancer but is living a very full life. The Cancer Care Alliance has kept her alive and our family mostly sane with amazing care, loving hands and constant vigilance.
This story posted by: **Betty Chavez**

I was diagnosed in Aug of 1999 with CML. Right after being diagnosed we looked for possible matches for a bone marrow transplant. Low and behold it was my sister who is scared of the sight of needles. She faced one of her greatest fears to help give me a future and I will always be grateful for this. I went to Seattle for the bone marrow transplant and received it on March 13, 2000. It was a long struggle for everyone involved, but here I am 11 years later in great health. I have been able to see my 3 children finish school and start their own families. I now have 4 wonderful grandchildren and am happy to say I have another grandson on the way. I love to spend time with my family and do various activities like yoga, zumba, body pump, and exploring the world on cruises. I would like to take a moment to say a huge THANK YOU to all the great caregivers at Fred Hutch and also to everyone who helped take care of me back in New Mexico. I am truly blessed with the best family anyone could wish for. Without each and everyone of you my life would not have been as fulfilling as it is today. It is because of the Hutch I have been able to have the kind of life that most people can only dream of. God Bless everyone, can’t wait to see you at the reunion and share our stories.

*My very first 5k run for the zoo. May not have placed but the finish alone is a huge accomplishment for me.*

---

This story posted by: **Lynda Chibri**

I had my BTM in the Providence hospital in Seattle Mar. 27, 1974. It was such a blessing as I have lived a very normal, healthy life. I’m now 65 yrs. old and have been married to my husband Dale for 48 yrs. We have two sons (one born post transplant I believe was the first one post transplant born 1976), we also have five grandchildren and two great grandchildren. We still live on a ranch at Neilburg, Saskatchewan, Canada. We raise purebred Speckle Park cattle. I also still work as EMT for our local ambulance for the last 30 yrs. My donor sister lives in Chilliwack British Columbia Canada, we continue to very close and the best of friends. I will be always grateful to Hutchinson Centre and the support staff for giving me a second chance at life.
This story posted by: **Todd Coburn**

It's been over 20 extraordinary years since I was diagnosed with CML at the age of 17. I consider myself very lucky to have had the opportunity to receive a BMT from the Hutchinson Center in 1992. They "wrote the book" on Bone Marrow Transplantation and I knew I couldn't have been in better hands. My transplant from an unrelated donor was a great success, allowing me to go on and live a productive, healthy and happy life. I have literally lived a whole second lifetime thanks to the care and long term follow-up from the Hutch. I'm grateful for my cancer experience and proud to be a survivor. I look forward to seeing you at the reunion!

![My passion, riding my motorcycle](image)

This story posted by: **Fuller A. Cowell**

First a special thanks to my team including but not limited to: Judy Campbell, Dr. Flowers, Dr. Higano and the dozens of nurses, PAs, techincans, researchers and workers who made my survival a reality. I'm thrilled to attend the reunion this year. It is my second, but my brother-in-law Eric Tripp's first. He was transplanted 3 years after me for AML. We are both enjoying every single day of our lives. We'll never forget that those days are a gift from the Hutch, and all the incredible people who work there now, or ever have worked there, especially Dr. Thomas and his wife. Thank You! Thank You!! Thank You!!! God Bless you every one.

![Me and my wife Sarah](image)

![Me at the Seattle to Portland bike ride last summer](image)

![Fuller Cowell in the middle with Dr. Thomas and his wife at the last reunion- 2005](image)
In June 1984, at the age of 28, I had a routine physical after teaching a morning aerobics class. The doctor commented that if everyone was as healthy as I was, she’d be out of work! Several hours later, I received "the call". My white count was inexplicably high. The next day, a bone marrow biopsy confirmed that I had CML. In 1984, the only option for a cure was a transplant from a related donor. When none of my four siblings were a match, the diagnosis became a death sentence. I was told I had three to four years to live.

I had been married for four years, and the hardest thing to accept was that I would never become a mother. Eight months later, much to our surprise, I became pregnant. Despite the risks of the pregnancy, and the fact that my husband would become a single parent; we chose to see the pregnancy through. We were blessed with a beautiful, healthy son. I threw myself into parenting, hoping to create some lasting memories for Luke; while grieving the fact that I would never see him go to kindergarten.

Apparently, God had different plans! Four years later, I was told about the NMDP, and that there was a chance I might find an unrelated donor. In June 1990, an amazing woman from Indiana donated the marrow that saved my life. My donor Cathy, has since become one of my dearest friends. Because of her, & the folks at FHCRC, not only did I see my son go to kindergarten; I was able to dance with him at his wedding last summer! Five years ago, we traveled to China to adopt our precious daughter, Hannah. Turns out that I had a chance to be a mother after all!

This story posted by: Sandy Da Costa

Today I am 35 years old and have battled and beaten cancer several times since my transplant at FHCRC at the age of 5. My toughest battle was fought 5 years ago with pancreatic cancer. I spent a week in Intensive Care with my family by my side, my sisters thought I wasn’t going to pull through this one. I did it with the strength and support of my family and friends who have never given up on me and refuse to let me die and my WILL TO LIVE. I am very thankful for all of them, especially my nieces and nephews who mean the world to me. It was a long, tough battle, the first of which I had to endure without my Mom, who has always been there by my side. My Mother, my greatest support, my rock lost her own battle with cancer at the age of 64, 7 years ago. I believe she was still with me as my Angel in heaven. I see how wonderful life is and how we all need to live for today like its our last and enjoy every moment of our short lives. Thank you FHCRC for supporting my battle with a transplant when I was 5 when the odds where stacked against me. I relate by battles with the song Back in Black by ACDC, "Forget the hearse cause I’ll never die, I got 9 lives, cat’s eyes, using every one of them and running wild." My life at 35 is amazing.
This story posted by: **Bev Dahlin**

I have not worked (for pay) since the transplant in 1998. When my husband Steve retired in 2000, we decided to pursue our passion for outdoor activities and travel. We have been leading international hiking trips to Europe, and also spend several months each year visiting other parts of the world, such as New Zealand, Iceland, etc. as well as exploring this wonderful country in our little pickup camper. I am blessed with a wonderful family and a strong network of supportive friends. Unfortunately, within the last 3 years, I have been diagnosed with asbestos related lung disease (from growing up in Libby, Montana) and this has been complicated by having had much radiation to my thoracic area. However, modifying my activity level, we are still able to travel, explore new regions, visit friends and family. And we have discovered the fun of cruising. So I am grateful for the wonderful opportunities I have had and the life I am still living. I also want to acknowledge my network of doctors, at Hutch, Swedish, and First Hill Medical in Seattle. They continue to go the extra mile for me. Thank you!

This story posted by: **Laura DiLella**

My son was just a year old when I was dx with AML. As I waved goodbye to him on the way to the airport to Seattle I wondered if I would ever see him again. Thanks to my sister who was a perfect match, the love and support from family and friends back home, the expertise and commitment of the doctors, nurses and researchers at Fred Hutch (especially Don Thomas) and my son back home who gave me the will to live I have had 27 wonderful years since transplant. One of the greatest joys of my life was to be able to dance with my son on his wedding day...a day I thought I would never see. My heart will always hold a special place for "the Hutch".
When I was diagnosed as having Myelodysplastic Syndrome RAEB-T at age 61, I was told to "get your affairs in order" since the only cure was a bone marrow transplant and I was too old. Expect to live about 9 months; maybe two years with proper treatment. ~

Through the national cancer hotline, I discovered that the Hutch was providing a special protocol for patients up to age 65 "if you qualify", which obviously I did. ~

My exact match brother Harold was my donor and I became one of the first stem cell transplant patients at age 62. Who ever heard of stem cells 15 years ago? It's been a long way from there to here!

But I'm extremely grateful to the medical folks at the Hutch for giving me another lease on life. As well as my brother, my caregiver Penny, my lawyer for beating up my insurance company, and many other supportive relatives and friends. ~

Here's a fitting quote about the experience with which I'm sure you'll identify: "It was titillating to brush up against the enigma of mortality, to steal a glimpse across its forbidden frontier." From the book "Into Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Mt. Everest Disaster" by Jon Krakauer. ~

Since retiring from the advertising and graphic design business, I've been marketing my three Maui vacation rental condos through my own website and internet advertising for the past 12 years. ~

How do I try to maintain good physical health? Golf twice a week. (For you golfers out there: now playing to a 15 handicap.) Taking a water aerobics/muscle conditioning class 3 or 4 times a week. Whew!

This story posted by: **Jim Egan**

My wife and I are enjoying our retirement from teaching. We have been traveling and even did some skiing this year. My health has been good. I have a little skin and eye Cgyh.

Thanks Hutch!
Having cancer has been for me a blessing and one of the better things of my life. I feel that it has made me better person. I am almost overwhelmed just to think about how much support I received from my family and friends, my mother and father, my wife Carol, our 4 children and my 4 siblings, especially my brother John who gave me his bone marrow. This will be my 3rd survivors reunion. I am very glad to be here and thankful for the life given to me here at the Hutch. I was diagnosed with CML in Feb 1993. I had a BMT from my brother John on Sept 9, 1993. I struggled for a couple of years but have done very well. I will be 71 on Sept 15. You can find more about me by googling "Bob Farmer Live" My personal web site http://oc.itgo.com/ My photography web site: http://rff.smugmug.com/ PS: This Sunday, the day after this reunion I will attend the wedding of my daughter Belinda - one of the greatest joys of being a survivor.

This story posted by: Bob Farmer

A referral to Fred Hutchinson for Multiple Myeloma and on 10/22/97 the journey begins; The gift of life was my brother’s bone marrow. Day one a volunteer brought a quilted blanket to me. We nicknamed it the Hutch Blinkie. The Hutch Blinkie that was given and made with love still has a place of honor on my bed and in my heart. My children and wife moved to Seattle. The kids attended the Hutch School and were inspired by their teachers. They will all tell you my transplant was the most difficult yet most inspirational journey of their lives. I set goals during my recovery. Goal 1 was to see Christopher graduate from high school, goal 2 was to see Anna use her natural talents for the greater good and finally I wanted to dance the father daughter dance with Elizabeth at her senior ballet recital. Year 3 I was there for my son’s high school graduation. Christopher’s valedictorian speech reflected our journey together. . Year 5, I walked the Leukemia and Lymphoma Maui Marathon with my wife. Year 12 I danced with my youngest daughter at her senior ballet recital. Year 13 Anna was hired at Fred Hutchinson as the Hematology Oncology Fellowship Program Administrator. It was her goal, ever since she was "published" in the Hutch School newspaper the "Hutch Times" Anna's job gives me the sense that I have come full circle, and as I approach year 15, I want to express my gratitude to the wonderful highly skilled nurses, staff and dedicated doctors that walked by my side during this journey. Thank you Fred Hutchinson for your continued research for the cure and for embracing my family and giving us hope.

This story posted by: Tom Ferris

I treasure my photo with Don and Dottie taken at the 2005 Patients Reunion

Hutch Blinkie
This story posted by: **Karen French**

In 2006, I was diagnosed with AML. To say it changed my life would be an understatement. I am so grateful to the staff of SCCA, every last one of them. To the lab technicians that told me jokes everyday, my wonderful doctors & fantastic nurses. It was such a wonderful environment to seek treatment, that I am so glad I made the trip to Seattle. You have blessed me with 5 more years (and counting). In that time I watched my son with Autism make his first friend and call me mom. I’ve watched my now 12 year old son learn to play 2 instruments, excel in school, and master the fine art of sarcasm. I stood by my husband’s side as he retired from the Army. I’ve been given the chance to live my life once again. Cancer changed me. I think about it every day. It made me look at my priorities in life and decide what was truly important. I no longer put off my dreams until some day in the future. I see the beauty in the smallest of things. I am thankful for one more day. I have realized that the side effects are no fun, but they sure beat the alternative. I know in my heart that I don’t have to look very far to see someone who struggles more than I ever will. I am so very grateful for all you have done, are doing, and will continue to do in the future for cancer patients. It has given me hope, which is the greatest gift you could have given to me. **THANK YOU!**

This story posted by: **Augusta Ferrari**

I had a peripheral blood stem cells transplant at the age of 73. Because of my advanced age only FHCRC was willing to try it. From the very beginning I was impressed by FHCRC organization, the professional level of the medical team, the serene and confident atmosphere they were able to communicate, always friendly and smiling. I never doubted that I would make it. It was an incredible experience. I owe my life to FHCRC and to my unrelated donor. My husband of 53 years has been my caregiver, sharing confidence and faith in the final good outcome. God first, and immediately next FHCRC! I have been in very good and capable hands.
Wow - 20 years already??? I was diagnosed with CML in October of 1990 at the age of 13. I found an unrelated donor and got my transplant in the nick of time a year later - my cancer was starting to move into the accelerated phase. While in Seattle I attended Hutch School and was named "Swedish Medical Center's Crankiest Patient" back in Oct of 1991 ;) I was able to attend a wonder camp for kids with cancer back where I lived in Oregon called Camp Ukandu. Now I am a counselor there and have been flying back to volunteer there every summer for the past several years. I have been happily married and childfree since 1998. My husband and I love to travel the world :) I can't wait for this reunion to hopefully see some familiar faces!!

All decked out in my outfit for TuTu Tuesday at Camp Ukandu - June 2011

Check-out day - first time leaving my bubble!! Swedish Medical Center's "Crankiest Patient" leaves the building!!

Here I am all gowned up for the long trip from Swedish to Fred Hutch for radiation...

In Aruba!

In Jamaica!
On August 31, 1995, I was diagnosed with CML Accelerated Phase with double Philadelphia chromosome. This was a shocking diagnosis. At the time, I was in very good physical shape, cycled regularly and ran in many races. My doctors in New Jersey were very pessimistic about my future. They gave me about one year to live. The Hutch saved my life. Sixteen months later, I received a bone marrow transplant from an unrelated female mis-matched donor. Seven months after that, I suffered from severe GVHD. Once again, the Hutch came to my rescue. While my recovery was slow, I did become healthy and was able to live life again. My parents and family were very supportive. My parents made extraordinary sacrifices for me and aided my recovery in so many ways. Despite a difficult journey, we met so many wonderful people in Seattle and had a very positive experience. Today I exercise like I used to and work very hard as a professor and in the law. And I am proud to have a big sister, Cheryl, my donor, who saved my life. Thanks to the Hutch, I was blessed a second time when I met my wonderful future wife Judy. We got married in 2009. Thank you FHCRC for giving me and my family a second chance.

I was diagnosed with ALL at age 37. My children were 7 and 10 at the time. I had my stem cell transplant from an unrelated donor 8 years ago. Since then we have met my donor, and she and I still stay in touch. I have not gone back to teaching as I do not have the stamina and other issues. However, my life now is fulfilling; I volunteer 2 mornings a week at a cancer resource center, I spend time with friends, and most of all I am a wife to my husband of 23 years and a mom to my 18 year old daughter and my 15 year old son. This June my daughter graduated from high school with many honors and awards. This was one of those moments I hoped and prayed for while fighting leukemia that I would be there to see. My gratitude for the many, many special moments in the last 8 years is just that much more intense. So I thank my donor, the SCCA, and all of the doctors and nurses who cared for me at home, and most especially my family, friends, and my God for giving me the strength to survive!
This story posted by: Anna R. Green

This is a "tag team" story of Anna: LISA (Anna's Mom): Our cherished daughter Anna was four months old when she was diagnosed with Juvenile Chronic Myelogenous Leukemia (JCML) in November of 1990. She asked me to write a little about her experience at FHCRC because she doesn't remember. Thankfully! She was so young. We got the terrible news at Children's Memorial in Chicago and were told that a bone marrow transplant was the only path to eradicate this disease which was unresponsive to chemo. At the time Children's did not have a transplant unit so we began our search for a program that would save our daughter's life. Then, a miracle happened. We found Dr. Jean Sanders! Dr. Sanders wanted to wait until Anna was a year old. We waited to begin Anna's treatment until June, 1991. Anna's older brother, Jeremy, was her donor though he was only a half match. Anna received a monoclonal antibody to fight the GVHD. This year marks the twentieth anniversary of Anna's transplant. She begins her junior year at Bennington College in Vermont.

ANNA: Growing up knowing that I was a cancer survivor wasn't easy. It was something that few others could relate to and they weren't people in my age group. I had to take growth hormones for most of my early years and even then I always knew I'd be shorter than kids my age. I struggled with a learning disability that I have now learned to work with. Now, twenty years after the transplant I am studying animation, fine arts and creative writing in college and I still find it difficult to tell my story to others. But where there's a will, there's a way.
This story posted by: Debra Johnson Hall

So there I was, 1 month after my wedding, diagnosed with AML! Sort of like being on a loaded freight train going down a Rocky Mountain incline with no brakes. Luckily the teams of the Seattle Cancer Care Alliance came through for me to fix the brakes! I was very fortunate to have my brother’s cells be an almost perfect match. And to have a whole team of prayer warriors hanging with me through every step. We kept fighting and kept believing, and came through the rigors of treatment pretty much just fine, only a wee bit of GVHD that resolved quickly. I am thrilled to have had 10 great years with my family and friends, and hope for many more ahead.

My husband and I love to ski, and found our way to 'pay it forward' by participating in "Hope on the Slopes", which manages to raise around $200K every year for the American Cancer Society. At midnight we do a torchlight run down the mountain in honor of family and friends who have cancer, or have passed on from cancer. It is very very moving, and my heart is filled with gratitude for the ability to 'carry the torch'. My favorite photos are my husband and I on the top of Big White mountain in Canada, with ski smiles on our faces! And this one of me, in my "Team Survivor" T-shirt signing up volunteers for Hope on the Slopes. Hey there Doctors, remember me with the boxing glove in my hospital room?? You all signed it, one of my favorites was "Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee!" Still fightin' and hanging in there! Thanks! But you better watch out, took up martial arts and I am breaking boards now at age 55! Wooo hooo!
This story posted by: Jacqueline Hansen

I was diagnosed with Multiple Myeloma the summer of 1996. I had never heard of this cancer. I feel very fortunate that I was a candidate for a clinical trial. For three months I took Thalidomide and dexamethasone. I then had my first auto transplant in Oct. and then the second in March. I spent six months at the Pete Gross House shuttling back and forth to the Hutch, where I received the best care in the world. The doctors and nurses were wonderful. Attentive, understanding and caring. Really caring. When I went to Seattle I had three grandchidren I now have eight and am loving every day I have. I am taking quilting classes and have more time to knit and sew since I am not working anymore. I am still tired much of the time but I am learning to pace myself and when I need to rest I rest. I don't push myself (try not to) I have been married for forty one years to a wonderful husband, have three grown sons, their wives and of course the eight grandchildren to enjoy. I thank God for everyday. And I thank the FHSCCA for being there.

This story posted by: Ann M. Hardy

Since my BMT on June 11,1991 I have been blessed with good health and enjoying my retirement years. A new addition to my family,...a 2nd great-grandchild, Landon, was born Feb. 1, 2011 to join his sister Brooke who will be 7 years old this June 11th, my transplant date! At 77, I keep busy volunteering, Senior aerobics, and singing in a local Chorus. I'm forever grateful to the Doctors, nurses, and PA's at "The Hutch" for the wonderful care and treatment I received...and to my brother Dave, my donor. God is good. Thank you, Ann Hardy

This story posted by: Karen Hartvig-Nielsen

Three weeks after graduating from NAU with a Master's in Counseling, I was given a diagnosis of Multiple Myeloma. I wasn't "overweight, out-of-shape, and middle-aged," as the doctors at the university health clinic had been telling me for two years. I was dying. My local oncologist gave me 18 months to two years. Can you imagine? A couple of weeks after my diagnosis, I was given a Reader's Digest article to read. The UW was working with a device that could separate stem cells from blood! The last paragraph stated that this device could help with Multiple Myeloma! I grabbed the phone, called the "Dub," and was referred to Fred Hutchinson. That call was the beginning of my new life. It has been an unbelievable journey. I won't say "I'd do it all over again for what I've learned," although I HAVE learned a tremendous amount.

Biji and Jasmine, my precious First and Second Birthday gifts!
Karen Hartvig-Nielsen continued: I WILL say that, since my body decided to have this disease, I am grateful that, with the support I received (medical, personal, spiritual and financial), I was able to turn a tragedy into something positive. I live life in constant gratitude and joy. I'm not a cancer "hero." I live quietly and peacefully, creating beauty in my garden and with my hands. I enjoy my family, my two little bichons, my knitting, my books, my writing, and my garden. I endure the pain, fatigue and continuing health issues with, I hope, grace and dignity. At least I strive for that.

Ten years...TEN YEARS...I've seen my youngest son married to a wonderful woman, and I've enjoyed watching my grandchildren, siblings, and parents grow older along with me! As Louis Armstrong sings, "What a Wonderful World." And what a miracle of life I've been given.

Celebrating my youngest son's wedding. My granddaughter Cati is the beautiful young lady beside me.

This story posted by: Gerald (Gary) Hayden

Thirteen and a half years ago I can remember that I hoped I would be able to see my oldest daughter graduate from high school (she was a junior at the time and my youngest daughter was in the 5th grade). Since that time both of my daughters have graduated not only from high school but from college and have good jobs. Nancy (my wife and caregiver) and I are doing very well. I am still actively working although thinking it might be time to retire. I will be 65 this year. As I reflect back I know how truly fortunate I am -- no complications at all, no meds and good health. I am not sure it can get any better than that. My only regret is that my brother and donor is no longer alive. I know that he was very proud of the fact that he contributed to my living. We just never got to do all that fishing we were planning on when we retired. If there were a few things I would pass along to those who wake up one day and suddenly find themselves in the fight of their lives - stay positive and focused on the fight. Everyone has a bad day and you are never in the fight alone. Get to Seattle. I remember when I went for my interview and talked with Dr. Witherspoon, as we were walking down the hall after being accepted he said "Don't worry Gary, we don't treat cancer here, we cure it". I have kept those words near to my heart since that day.
I was 15 when I was diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma. Although it was traumatic to lose my hair, my treatment was relatively easy and I went into remission. Unfortunately I relapsed just over a year later. This time the treatment was harder, but didn't work. My hope for a cure was a bone marrow transplant. Fortunately I did not have to travel far, from Tacoma to Seattle, to be at the best place to receive my transplant, the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center and the Cancer Care Alliance.

I received my transplant on December 17th, 2002. Following my transplant I experienced life threatening complications. I ended up in the intensive care unit with veno-occlusive disease (VOD). The doctors gave me a 50-50 chance. Fortunately I qualified for a clinical study involving a new research drug, which I received four times a day for four weeks. It worked and my VOD was resolved.

It has been eight years since my transplant. Unfortunately I now suffer side effects, what I call, "the battle taking place inside my body," AKA Graft versus Host Disease (GVHD). My GVHD reared its ugly head mostly during my college years. Initially we tried increasing steroids and new immune-suppressant drugs, but nothing stopped the GVHD. Through the support of the GVHD on-line support group I learned about and began doing ECP. I took a quarter off of school when I started treatment, but with determination, I returned the next quarter. The treatments worked and I graduated from college in 2009 with a bachelor's degree in Human Services. I was married in 2010 and started a career in working with adults with disabilities. Although I am still afflicted with GVHD, it has stabilized and I am gradually decreasing my need for medications.

12 years ago I was teaching white water rescue and safely guiding rafts down class 4 rivers. Inspecting spillways on dams, performing rescues on mountains. Today I am wondering how I am going to pay for a hotel in Seattle for the FHCRC/SCCA reunion. I had CML with an unrelated bone marrow transplant 1999. I must say the first 5 years where the most frustrating years. I was so eager to get well and be the leader, adventurer, "Live life to the fullest" kind of guy. I worked hard to get healthy. To get back into the life I thought I had temporarily left behind. Only to find that I had permanently left it behind. Ice hockey was my first real passion in life #1.
Tim Howard continued: I started skating when I was 7 yrs old. It was the only talent that survived the transplant with me into life #2. Two years ago I was asked to coach the 13-14 yr. olds (Bantams). These kids had a bad string of coaches growing up and needed someone to give them some hope and show them hockey is fun. This may have been one of the things I was lacking in my recovery. The 1st season I took 10 talented boys and an amazing goaltender, to the division championships. The second year, 3 of our top players moved to the next level, but I picked up 3 players with lots of heart. A small team of 10 players again. This team proved to me that a small group working together as one can do great things. We won the Divisional championship game 6-2. I could not have been prouder for the team.

This story posted by: Kurt Huffman

Hello, I was 27 years old when I was diagnosed with Chronic Myelogenous Leukemia and had a FHCRC Bone Marrow Transplant in 1992. Although my Bone Marrow Transplant was 19 years ago and I still work with BMT patients today but it is difficult for me talk about what Bone Marrow Transplant was like back in the old days when it is so much more technologically advanced today. At the last BMT Reunion in 2005 I bought a memorial for the FHCRC courtyard that reads, "I will never forget the young child I saw die following bone marrow transplant. It will always be in my memories and has forever changed how much I value life." Lastly, since my Bone Marrow Transplant I have made a home, started my own business, completed two Master’s Degrees, traveled North America, Europe, and the Middle East, and have been married for 23 years...so whatever should come in the future I had the chance to do what I wanted with my life!

This story posted by: Jessica

I was diagnosed with AML in 1998 at 11 years old. After a horrible experience at UCLA, where I received chemotherapy, my mom and I trudged up to Washington State, where I would receive my bone marrow transplant at Fred Hutch. Admittedly, my memory is a bit fuzzy, but I know that Fred Hutch treated us well. I'm alive today because of my bone marrow donor, my brother, and because the staff of Fred Hutch gave me amazing care and support. In fact, I had such a good experience, that at 21 years-old I decided to move back up to Seattle, to experience the city cancer-free. If not for Fred Hutch, I never would have found my place in the Emerald City. I am now a Washington State resident, Seattle Culinary Academy graduate, and a happy-go-lucky, 24-year-old, HEALTHY woman.
Thank you very much for the invitation; sorry I won't be able to come, it is the same day as my niece's wedding in the U.K. I wish all the best for the reunion function. I am keeping quite well. It's been 31 years now. My knee joints were troubling me a lot so I got my bilateral tkr surgery in March. I do have some pain still, but otherwise I am okay. Rest everything is fine. Thanks for remembering me. Regards to all the doctors & staff at Fred Hutch. My special regards to Dr. Thomas & his wife. Love Saroj

This story posted by: Helen Kerner

Thank you Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, Dr. E. Donnell Thomas and the entire staff of the organization! Special praise and remembrance to the late Percy Randle who inspired me from day one. The experience of my bone marrow transplant enriched my life beyond imagining. I published a book of poems, "The Journey" about my experience and, with my husband and caregiver, we've presented what we learned in a workshop at the Chautauqua Institution in New York titled "After The Shock, The Journey: Navigating Critical Illness". Telling our story to others has kept us grateful and demonstrates to others facing such a path that survival and a fulfilling life after transplant is definitely possible. My leukemia forced us to stop talking about and actually re-prioritize our lives. Since my transplant we have retired, relocated twice, traveled extensively and welcomed a grandson, Archer, now 3, who was born unexpectedly with Down syndrome. (Archer is the primary reason for the last relocation!) Though often thought by others to be a tragedy, Archer's condition, like my leukemia, has given us and his network of family and friends the opportunity to grow in unpredictable and wonderful ways. I truly believe every experience, whether initially labeled "good" or "bad" truly is fraught with opportunity and filled with unexpected gifts. These reunions are such a special time to reflect on the wonders of science and medicine, to be grateful for people like Dr. Thomas and Percy, and to share a special thanks to my younger brother, Manson, who still proudly carries the mantel of "Marrow Man" and will join us at the reunion.
This story posted by: Ryan Kilbury

On August 12, 2005 I was diagnosed with Myelodysplastic Syndrome. 35 years old and now I have to deal with this. This diagnosis was at a very difficult time in our lives, I had a daughter in 2005, my grandpa passed away in 2005, as did my mother. To say this is a life changing event is a severe understatement; anyone that goes through any type of treatment is a hero no matter the results. This is war; it's hand-to-hand combat. The guts to understand the consequences of treatment, chances of survival, drug effects and financial problems you face, is amazing. I was lucky, perfect match, quickly found, a disease caught early, body built to take the punishment and a survival attitude. Now 5 years later I am coming to the Survivor's Reunion with mixed emotions. You want to be inspirational to those who are where you were, you want to give them that reassurance that it can be done and you are proof, but a part of you, just wants to move on and not remember what you had to go through and instead focus on what is today and lies ahead of you. When you have those great opportunities or days you celebrate. I will be meeting my donor later this year when she travels to Washington to see me and the family, a woman who seems to have an endless supply of good in her, despite all that she has going on. She is an inspiration to me and I hope a little of that rubs off on me when I see her. Thanks to all who came before me and to everyone who helped me through this journey.

This story posted by: Jinsook Kim

I thought I had a bad cold with fever and night sweats. I went to see my doctor who took a blood test which came back with high white count. I was referred to UW oncology where I was treated for my colon cancer 15 years ago. I felt a sense of relief when I saw the same doctors again because of my previous positive experience. My family and friends were a great support to me during the challenging time of my life. My devoted husband and two daughters cared for me with love. My eldest daughter took a leave of absence from 1st year of medical school to stay with me. My younger daughter was in her last year of college who also took care of me postponing her final semester. The diagnosis of ALL was shocking to all of us, but we came together as one and stayed positive and hopeful. My friends visited and prayed for me everyday and took turns bringing food, support and love while I was in recovery. The wonderful staff at SCCA always gave me a feeling of reassurance that I will be able to recover. I participated in clinical research trials wanting to contribute to the medical society as a patient. I was able to get a bone marrow transplant from a wonderful donor who was like a gift from heaven. After 6 months, I felt myself progressively getting better, stronger and stable. This year, I am 5 yrs post-transplant. I have more confidence and gratitude towards life. My two daughters are now doctors. I'm back to normal life, enjoying life. People who are going through similar illnesses tell me they feel encouraged when they see me. My faith is stronger than ever and that God is always with me.
This story posted by: **Linda Krebsbach**

It has been 30 years this February that I went through my transplant. My brother Gary was my bone marrow donor and my sister Peg was my white cell donor. I have many brothers and sisters so I was very fortunate to have two donors. Seattle is my second home and when it is time for me to come here for the Celebration of life - I never turn it down. I am so thankful the tutors were offered to us patients as I did have my girls stay with me during the transplant procedure. It was a part of my healing process. I live in Mosinee Wisconsin and am very thankful to be here. With me is my oldest daughter that stayed with me during my transplant. Hum...which one is the daughter?

This story posted by: **Janice (Jan) Lakin**

It's mind boggling to think that it has been almost 13 years since my first autologous transplant in November 1998 followed by the life saving allogeneic transplant from my brother, Jim, in February 1999. Jim offered his cells even before we knew that a transplant was my only hope for a cure or that he would be a perfect match. Little did he know that his "older" sister's cells would try to take over and that he would have to make yet another trip up to Seattle from Texas to donate more of his cells to let my cells know whose cells were really in charge of the "pak-man" game against any cancer cells that might try to appear. Jim, you are my hero! Do any of you remember the pictures in the donor room at the original Hutch showing the picture of the dog (pre-transplant) and the cat (post-transplant) or vice versa? I always loved looking at that! I'm so thankful my bone marrow is now Jim's even if my children loving referred to me as Uncle-Mom for a while.

To my husband, my family, our host family, our Seattle and out-of-town friends and each of my caregivers I say "thank you" and I love you!

There are no words to adequately express my gratitude to all of the doctors and nurses who cared for me. Each was amazing! Their hope and encouragement mixed with reality and exemplary care have given me these 13 years! THANK YOU!!

Janice (Jan) and James (Jim) Cravens, Jr.
This story posted by: **John 'Jack' Lee**

Fred Hutch saved my life. Am I glad I came from New Jersey for my transplant. I had MDS. My brother was donor. Cancer has changed my life. Life is better even though I have GVHD and some problems that go with it. These last 10 years have been the best of my life. It's all attitude, Let's all be grateful for what we have. I thank all that might remember me Pat Groef the best ever, and Dr.Paul Martin are you still whistling down the hallways ? and many more. I didn't want to leave to come home,BUT you made me, Regards to all Happy Jack from New Joisy ps sorry I will not be at celebration. Look for my brick on the patio bet you can’t find it

This story posted by: **Iva Lesky**

![Image](image1)

Just how do you thank the people who saved your life? Just how do you integrate the miracle that you experienced? Six year, two weeks and ... I count every day from the day of my transplant. I wake up grateful and joyful. Sometimes I fear future problems, but then I return to the gift that I have already received. I know full well that I am graced to be alive today because of many people. I am alive because my very special oncologist, Owen O'Connor sent me to Fred Hutch to be part of a clinical trial for Lymphoma patients. I am alive because of the many profoundly outstanding doctors, nurses, researchers, support staff, and technicians at Fred Hutch who each did their part with compassion and the highest level of competence. Each and every one of you has my eternal gratitude. Thank you!

"Joy," watercolor by Iva Lesky

This story posted by: **Joel Levin**

![Image](image2)

I am alive today because of an incredible series of fortunate events, all initiated by my resourceful and unrelenting wife, Mary. Specifically, in early 2001, shortly after moving to Tucson, Arizona from Madison, Wisconsin: On a hike that we were taking, Mary fell while attempting to climb over a fence, breaking three ribs, which led to...her seeking medical attention and finding Tucson internist, Dr. Philip Galasso...whom she coerced to become our family physician and...who suggested that I come in for a routine physical examination...that included several blood tests, one of which alerted Dr. Galasso, a one-time fellow at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, to......an IGG level that was running rampant and for which I was referred to an oncologist, Dr. Jonathan Schwartz......who diagnosed my Stage 3 multiple-myeloma condition, and......through Mary's tireless investigations and dogged determination, she eventually landed on Seattle's famed Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center and......with the expertise and under the watchful eyes of oncologist researchers -- principally Dr. Leona Holmberg, who has now shepherded me through two autologous stem cell transplants -- who, along with Dr. Schwartz......and the miraculous historical timing of medical science and its increasingly wondrous drugs......have worked their magic to keep me alive and, without...
Joel Levin continued: a doubt, have made it possible for me to be with you on this momentous occasion. And so to all of the researchers out there searching for the next generation of cancer-fighting drugs and therapies, to the phenomenal physicians, medical assistants, and support staff at the Hutch in Seattle and at Arizona Oncology Associates and Camp Lowell Medical Specialists in Tucson, and especially to the source of this incredible series of fortunate events -- my loving wife Mary -- I thank you from the bottom of heart today, just as I have done every single day since February 2001!

This story posted by: Jerry Liebermann

This year marks the 30th anniversary of my first transplant and the 20th anniversary of my second one. We recently celebrated our 30th wedding anniversary and our daughter just turned 20. It is truly a year to celebrate.

Family photo while vacationing in Colorado

This story posted by: Malinda Lippiatt

I had just turned 25 in April and was planning my son's 2nd birthday in June of 1985 when I received the news that I had AML. I was admitted into the local hospital when my gums wouldn't stop bleeding after a routine cleaning of my teeth. After 5 weeks of chemo I had reached remission. My doctor had suggested that a bone marrow transplant was my best option of treatment and that Fred Hutchinson Center should be the place to go. So, with much thought and prayer mix with a lot of luck and support from family and friends we made the decision to go without looking back. My only sibling, my older sister, Lorie, was a perfect match for my donor and we headed to Seattle the 1st of September. I just celebrated 25 years on September 24, 2010. Thanks to the wonderful staff at Fred Hutchinson and my sister, Lorie, I have lived to see my only son graduate from College and enjoy all the blessings life has to offer. This will be my 1st reunion and I look forward to meeting new friends and seeing old ones. Malinda and Lorie in Big Bear Lake, CA

This story posted by: Linda Mack

Everything changed that day in 2004 when I was diagnosed with AML. It's a feeling that only people who are given the same diagnosis can understand. The words are frightening; the prognosis unsettling, the treatment protocol confusing. After being treated with various chemotherapy concoctions, I stayed in remission 9 mos. and relapsed. I was unable to get back into remission and my only hope was the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center and a MUD stem cell transplant. In 2005, I had sought out the Hutch for a second opinion. A fellow patient was talking about his wonderful experience and successful mini-transplant. I'd never heard of this place, but his enthusiasm convinced me to travel across the country. When I relapsed, my local oncologist helped me get approval to go back to Seattle and on March 24, 2006, I received my life-saving transplant. The five years since have had ups and downs. I am still treated for chronic GVHD and have severe dry eyes. My life has changed. I have met the most courageous, inspiring people along the way and been blessed by their presence in my life. "Going through a stem cell transplant is not for sissies; and neither is GVHD." I am thankful to my husband and sister who stayed with me in Seattle and all the wonderful people who cared for me. I am delighted to celebrate with so many survivors.
In November 2000 I received a monkey bite on the top of Gibraltar. I was rushed to urgent care but continued to stay in Europe as my arm swelled in size. Upon arriving home I had a CBC and was told that I had CML. I was able to get on a drug trial with Gleevec and then relapsed one year later in Blast crisis. I was so fortunate in being able to find an unrelated donor in Germany for allogeneic SCT June 2002. I had a touch and go 85 days at the Hutch but made it through with 2 induction chemos beforehand at OHSU.... I am so grateful for the care I received at both places, esp Judy Campbell LTF throughout the years and Dr. Mary Flowers. I can't describe how much I have been looking forward to this reunion to meet each of you, connect with GVHD support listmates, revisit my previous life at the hutch and make new friends... Life is so much different for me at 9 years post SCT and I hope I can give you HOPE things will improve...... My best to you all.

This story posted by: **Jeannie Matthews**

After being told you have a minimal number of years to live all else seems insignificant. Family and friends, what else counts. Then you find an oncologist that knows of treatments for your disease that look promising. The risks are high, but it's the only hope. You'll be leaving two young children and a wife behind with or without this procedure. The only question is when. Patty and I decided the only choice is to undergo this procedure, a bone marrow transplant. The procedure presented both fear and hope. Needless to say hope won out. Because of all of you who work tirelessly at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center I have LIVED not survived 25 years and I am looking for many more years. I can never say enough about the incredible nurses who made my stay as comfortable as possible. With humility I say THANK YOU.

This story posted by: **Clark Meinert**

I developed ALL in May of 1984. In January of 1985 I had my Bone Marrow transplant. My sister Karen was a perfect match. I was in a LAF room for 88 days and in the hospital for 133 days total. I am now 50 years old looking forward to my 51st birthday in just a couple of days. I made it 26 years longer than the doctor predicted. I have had no GvH problems. In October of 2006 I had a mild stroke which took me a year to recover from. With the results of the stroke and my radiation treatment I have had issues with my memory. Overall, my health has been good. Just about the beginning of June this year I was diagnosed with Breast Cancer. Treatment has begun and the outlook is excellent. I will start my radiation treatment shortly. I have learned with my treatment of the ALL that a positive outlook is vital in times like this. All I have to say is "Bring it on!".

This story posted by: **Shirley Diane Bowen Michalowski**
My journey started in October of 2001 when I was told I had Leukemia. After a bone marrow aspiration and 2 days of waiting for the results, we found out I had Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia with a Philadelphia Chromosome. (how could that be??...I've never been to Philadelphia!) and that my only hope for a long term remission was a Stem Cell Transplant. Since I was adopted, I had no 'family' to see if anyone matched. Thankfully, a person in the National Bone Marrow Registry was the perfect match for me. We met 2 years after my Transplant and are great friends now and we see each other now when time permits. She lives in Wisconsin. She has actually matched 2 other people and has given Bone Marrow to them as well...She's my Hero! I am living life making each day count and thank the Hutch, the SCCA, all the Dr's and Nurses for their excellent care and giving me more days than I thought possible. I also thank my husband Rick, and my sister Jaci, for putting their lives on hold while I tried to hold onto mine. I could not have done it without them by my side every step of the way, as well as my friends and family sending prayers and good wishes. Life is a gift... Live in the Present!
On February 28, 1995 my world changed forever. After feeling ill and having trouble breathing for weeks, my doctor finally took a blood test. At 9AM the following morning my phone rang. It was my doctor..."we need to see you immediately". I knew something was terribly wrong. She said, "You have CML and go straight to the hospital". My white count was 385,000 and I was put immediately on a machine to thin out my white blood cells. After several medications and a year trial on Interferon, my only option was a bone marrow transplant. I went to a cancer center here in California. They were very pessimistic and gave me only a thirty percent chance for survival. That number was unacceptable to me and my family. That's when we started searching. We would have gone to the ends of the earth if we had to. Thankfully that was not the case. We researched which center had the highest success rate and found Hutchinson. At Hutchinson we were given a more positive prognosis, then the donor search began. Within nine months three donors were found, but all backed out. After months of searching another donor was found and I had my transplant on February 20, 1997. After a year of my donor and I corresponding, we finally were able to meet and to my surprise she lived in Maryland. After a long awaited year and a half, we met in Washington DC at a fundraising event for Leukemia research in front of 1000 people! From that day we became close friends, just like family. We have vacationed, attended family weddings and our families have become close. Thank you Hutch for giving me a wonderful second life.

This story posted by: Joanie Morse

I was 45 years old when I was diagnosed with Multiple Myeloma. I received my Autologous Stem Cell Transplant 10 years ago this summer. I was lucky to see my daughter graduate High School two years later. In the meantime, I've become a Grandmother of two girls. I continue to do well without medication. Looking back 10 years, I did not believe it would have been possible for me to be alive today. I will be forever grateful to the Hutch, the SCCA, the UW and their Scientists, Doctors, Nurses and staff for making life today possible. Thank you for this opportunity to celebrate. Happy and grateful for this life.

This story posted by: Eva Thomas Neske
This story posted by: **Mike Neudorfer**

It has been an amazing 20 years since my BMT in 1991. I am so grateful to all the doctors and staff at Group Health Central and Fred Hutch. They not only took care of me, but my family as well. I faced many obstacles during my transplant, CMV, fungal infection, counts were very slow in returning, and platelets took over a year to return to a low normal and of course GVHD. My health today is great. I did have cataract surgery quit a few years ago, but other than that, I am healthy with no long-term side effects. I have been married to my wife for 23 years and we have a beautiful daughter who just turned 12. She keeps us very busy going to all of her sporting events throughout the school year and often into the summer months. I have been working for a Mechanical Engineering Firm for the past 25 years and really enjoy my work. I have been fortunate to have done some traveling with work and have been able to visit some fabulous places like, China, Japan, Hong Kong, Guam, Hawaii and Alaska. When I am not at one of our daughters sporting events or at work, I enjoy spending time in the yard and being in the outdoors. The Pacific Northwest is a great place to live for outdoor activities. I am again so grateful to all the doctors and staff who were involved and helped me through the BMT. I am looking forward to the celebration this weekend and am hoping to re-connect with some familiar faces.

This story posted by: **Amy Ney**

I was diagnosed with AML in December of 1982. I came to Seattle on March 29th 1983 and had my transplant on April 8th. I was extremely fortunate to have a brother and a sister who were matches, my brother John flew with us to Seattle to be the donor but when we had our family conference with Dr Thomas he decided we should use my sister Jean because I had not received any blood or platelets from her, he thought it would be better. I was in Seattle a lot longer (137 days post transplant) than any of the other patients who had transplants at the same time as I did and even those after me, due to severe GVH. Because of this, my mom and I met many wonderful families and I had some of the best doctors and nurses a patient could ask for. Even though I was a pretty sick young lady I would not trade my time here. I live in Kansas and whenever anyone askes me why I went "clear" to Seattle I always tell them because FHCRC is the best. Thank you for having these reunions; it gives me a reason to return to a city that I have come to love.

*Amy, Marge, Jean*  
*My mom, brothers, sister and I*  
*The family*
With God’s direction, I discovered one of the most beautiful and unique cities and the best transplant facility in the U.S. I am thrilled to be returning to Seattle to attend the reunion and to celebrate the 10th anniversary of my bone marrow transplant. I want to express my appreciation to the staff at SCCA, celebrate with transplant survivors, and enjoy the beauty of my favorite city. In 1997, I was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin lymphoma. After several treatments followed by decreasing intervals of remission, my physician, Dr. Peter Emanuel, suggested I consider receiving a bone marrow transplant. My sister Freida was a perfect match and was selected as my donor. After much prayer and research, I chose SCCA. I met with Dr. David Maloney whom I trusted with all decisions related to my care. From May 2001 until September 2001, my family and I lived in Seattle. The community embraced everyone from the medical staff and volunteers to the families of the Seattle Mariners. They were amazing! I received a nonmyeloablative transplant/mini-transplant which resulted in a split chimerism. My bone marrow transplant has been successful even though my sister’s immune system did not completely engraft. Since I continue to have a combination of both my cells and my sister’s cells, my family fondly calls me Fran...Freida and Jan. Coincidentally or perhaps in divine humor, my host family was Larry and Fran (BMT recipient). I am grateful to my sister, my husband (Keith), my children, family and friends, Dr. Emanuel, Dr. Maloney, Joanne Quinn, Larry and Fran, the staff at SCCA and the Pete Gross House, volunteers and the community. What a gift I have received! Most importantly, I thank my Father in heaven because I know that every good and perfect gift is from above.

Still kicking after 22 years post-transplant. I have seen my son graduate from middle school, high school and college. I have seen him get a master’s degree and maybe, in a few years, his doctorate. He is married to a lovely lady and has 2 great dogs who love me dearly. I am a piano teacher these days, and I do a lot of volunteer work at my church and for the political party of my choice. Life is treating me well thanks to Fred Hutch and my donor, my sister Alice.
This story posted by: **Shawn Pavese**

August 1998: single mom of a 3yr old son is diagnosed with CML. Bone marrow donor search begins. January 1999: a match is found, female willing to give the gift of life to a total stranger. April 1999: patient and her caregiver father travel to Seattle. Grandma remains in NY to care for her 3yr old son. May 6, 1999: day of bone marrow transplant. very special since this is also her birthday. May 6, 2011: 12yrs Leukemia free!!!! 3yr old son is now 15yr. Thank you to the Fred Hutch team of caring doctors, nurses and social workers. Thank you to my dad for being my caregiver and to my mom for being Matt's caregiver. Most of all thank you to Rivy. With out your selfless act of kindness I would not be her today.

*Photos:*
with matt on vacation 2010
May 6th getting my new marrow

This story posted by: **Heather Prell**

My story began in 2000. Bruises started appearing all over my body, and I was getting headaches. Nothing to be initially alarmed about. I just figured that maybe I was anemic. I told my chiropractor about it, and he was actually the one to suggest I get a blood test. So, I went in on a Friday to get tested, was told my counts were all out of whack, and that I needed to be seen by a "Hematologist" on Monday. That's when I was diagnosed with AML, and immediately began treatment. Although I was initially in remission, I eventually relapsed and was told I needed a transplant, which took place in March of 2002. I have been doing quite well since then, and am very grateful to God, my family, friends, the doctors and nurses, and my amazing, selfless donor who helped make me well again. My family and I hope to attend this weekend's events, as I look forward to meeting other survivors and being part of this momentous event.
This story posted by: **Linda Rahaim**

I had non hodgkins lymphoma on 8/1/86 and went from 1 tumor to 4 tumors the size of a large grapefruit in 6 months. Had a bone marrow transplant with my identical twin sister and in 10 days, all the tumors disappeared. Doctors were amazed. Within 25 years later though, I developed CHF, SVCS, thyroid problems, cataracts etc from chemo that did damage. Also radiation caused blood vessel stenosis. Had open heart surgery Nov 09 and am now on disability. My body is anorexic and I have muscle wasting due to the surgery. Have had many angioplastys, a pacemaker insertion and 2 stents put in. But my spirit is high. I was told I am one of the longest survivors they have. I am now 55 yrs. old and was 30 when I had the cancer. I thank God for His grace and peace and hope to encourage many of you in your struggles. God bless, Linda Rahaim

This story posted by: **Steve Re**

I was diagnosed as I was turning 42. After round 1 of chemo at my local hosp. I caught a fungal infection in the brain. My oncologist said the best chance I had was at the Hutch. I have danced with my daughter at the past 8 daddy daughter dances in our town and watched our son learn to drive, graduate from high school and start his college career. My wife and I have totally rearranged our priorities. As Sheryl Crow says in Soak up the Sun, Its not having what you want , its wanting what you've got. I have been blessed. Every day I wake up its a good day, if you wake up in your bed rather than a hospital bed, its a great day. Many people comment and ask me why I'm always happy and sunny. Life is Beautiful and I love being alive to enjoy it.
This story posted by: Edward Rhodes

"Coincidence" or "God's Perfect Timing"
If any one of this happened 6 months later I wouldn't be here today. September 1991, 53 years old, my wife Dottie convinced me to change to her Health Insurance. I had to use her Doctor, who conducted a complete physical and blood tests - my first in 15 years. Immediately after test results came back, I saw oncologist Dr. James Lechner. Two bone marrow aspirations confirmed I had CML. My kids and sister were a close donor match, but not close enough. I was put on the national registry searching for a perfect match. Daily Interferon shots worked well for 9 months then quit. (they usually work well for years!) Now in Blast Crisis, but still physically able to work on my construction projects. A perfect match unrelated donor became available. Time to consider a bone marrow transplant. I'm told there is only 20% chance to survive this. Now this is serious! Time to make sure my will is up to date, turn my construction business over to my sons, to get my heart right with the creator and his son Jesus. I scheduled the transplant, shook the big Doctor's hand and said "let's make it 25%". My transplant was 18 years ago March 1993, in a special sterile room at Swedish Hospital. I was 54 1/2 years old, 55 was "you're too old" age. I can't help but think about my good fortune. There wasn't a match in my family but found a perfect match through the National Registry, the generosity of my donor Mike Dombeck, the wonderful Doctor's and nursing staff at the Hutch. I met my donor Mike a year after my transplant. He calls me his "blood Brother." We have visited several times over the years.

This story posted by: Maria Rodriguez-Baro

On April 13th 1990 I received a bone marrow transplant. I have overcome my health problems thank to the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Reasearch Center Professionals. Even though I didn't speak a word of english, when these Professionals asked me "How are you Maria?" I always answered "Everything OK, thank you!" ;-

In the picture MARIA RODRIGUEZ-BARO climbing the Glacier Perito Moreno (Argentina, 01/02/2011); Proposing a toast to the sky, thanking God, Dr.Donald Thomas and the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, for allowing me to enjoy life every minute of ever
This story posted by: **Lori Roques**

After not feeling well I made an appt. with my doctor. My blood work came back with high white counts. He suggested I see an oncologist. The oncologist did a bone marrow biopsy. He said I had a blood disease called Myelofibrosis. They said you could live with it just need to be checked often. Well in my case the disease became very aggressive. I started losing weight and have severe bone pain. I was even in a wheel chair for a short time. I have many blood transfusions in 2002 as my red counts kept dropping. Met with Doctors in CA and AZ. My husband and I went to WA State to Seattle Cancer Care/Fred Hutchinson. They started a search for a bone marrow match as my siblings did not match me. I was preparing to have a stem cell transplant. My spleen was getting grossly enlarged which happens a lot with these disease. It was pressing on other organs and very uncomfortable. They found a perfect match for me. My spleen was removed by a wonderful Surgeon, as my spleen had gotten so large. After intense treatment (high dose chemo) and many tests and scans I was ready for the transplant on April 4th 2003. My husband was my caregiver. He was wonderful. We stood 5 months in WA. The Hutch took wonderful care of me. I have two wonderful children and I have two grandchildren and a third grandchild due in August. I have been a First Connection Volunteer with The Leukemia/Lymphoma society since 2004 and am one of the honored heroes for this year's "Light the Night Walk". I am Very Thankful to my Donor, my Family, the Leukemia/Lymphoma Society and Seattle Cancer Care/Fred Hutchinson for all their support.

This story posted by: **Mike Rubin**

Twenty-four years have passed since my sister's marrow entered my body. I am still so grateful for my family's support during my illness and recovery. Since that time, I've been a nursing student, a baker, a student of law and a fundraiser for the Hutch. A non-practicing attorney, I have been married and divorced, have the most incredible daughter one could ever hope for, and fulfilled a life-long dream of traveling to Africa. My gratitude to Don and Dottie Thomas, all the researchers, doctors, nurses, staff, volunteers and supporters of the Hutch/SCCA runs deep. My hope is that with continued research, cancers will be prevented or treated so effectively that the dark cloud that can come with survival and sometimes obscures the joy of living, vanishes.
This story posted by: **Barbara L. Russell**

Shortly after I remarried in 1985, I was diagnosed with Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma. I was not concerned; perhaps, because my sister had been diagnosed with Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma eight months before me and after 5 chemotherapy treatments was in remission (and still is 21 years later). I then had several rounds of chemotherapy treatments over the next six years, culminating in Dr. Weiner (my Hematologist at Lahey Clinic) and me agreeing that I should have a bone marrow transplant. Dr. Weiner then had to convince the Lahey Clinic Board to allow me to go to Fred Hutchinson and he prevailed. I thank God every day for Dr. Weiner and all the Doctors, Nurses, and physical therapists at Fred Hutch. I had my transplant in February 1991 and my younger (only) brother, Jim, was my bone marrow donor and my son, Kevin, supplied the platelets. This was truly a family affair. When I look at my granddaughter, Samantha Grace (2? yrs old) I think of the amazing joy I would have missed if it were not for "the Hutch."

This story posted by: **Leah Sattler**

In 1988, when I was 11 years old, I was diagnosed with CML. In 1989, I had a bone marrow transplant from unrelated donor who was from England. I graduated from High School in 1994, met my husband in 1995, and graduated from College in 1997. In 1998, I married my Husband, Gregg, who was in the Army at the time. Three months later we met my bone marrow donor, Karen, and her family while they were in the States on Holiday.

A few months later we found out that my husband was going to be stationed in Germany. In 1999, we moved to Germany and lived there for 3 amazing years. That last year that we were there, my parents moved to England for a few years. I was able to go visit them and we all were able to go visit my donor. In 2002, my husband got out of the Army and we moved back to Seattle. Since then, we have been working, traveling, going to school, enjoying each other, spending time with family and friends and living life. Without Fred Hutch and my bone marrow transplant, I would not have been around to fall in love, get married, travel the world and meet and know my nieces. I would have missed out on all the joys and sorrows of life. Thank you so much for the last 22 years and all the years to come.

This story posted by: **Clyde Schendzielos**

"HAD" non-hodgkins lymphoma. 10 months of chemo, 2 weeks of spot radiation, and then the BMT. 9/12/86 received my oldest brother’s marrow. WOW, coming up on that quarter century milestone. Have had the thyroid and cataract problems too. Had basal cancer cell removed from just below my left eye about two years ago. I have been blessed to walk both of my daughters down the aisle, danced at their reception and to part of our two grand daughters lives. Life is great all things considered!!! Would not have missed it for the world. Thank you God, Hutch, and all who do what they do at the Hutch. Got a blue bracelet at the last reunion and have not taken it off since. Can’t wait to see you all this reunion. Then it is off to Disneyworld with our whole family.
This story posted by: **Michael Scheurich**

Mike Scheurich - Stem Cell Transplant Survivor at 5 years. In May of 2006, my Doctor informed me that my blood tests were abnormal and it looked like Leukemia (AML). The heavy Chemo began...at one time, I spent 35 days in the Hospital. My body was very worn out. To me, periodic Chemo was not a bright future....The possibility of a "Bone Marrow Transplant" was discussed. The SCCA accepted me into their transplant program in July 2006....and a new phase of the Journey began.....I am so grateful. It turns out that there were many Positive Factors in my favor ......a courageous caregiver (my Wife), in otherwise good health, and a perfect match donor, my Brother, Jim. On August 17, 2006 I received a Stem Cell Transplant. The next 100+ days were filled new routines, good times and hard times, but relatively few complications over all. My Wife and I walked all over South Lake Union and into Seattle proper as mandatory exercise. I learned to like Seattle. The SCCA "Yellow Team" was fabulous, always there if you were in need and keeping you "on task". The Long-Term Follow up Team has been wonderfully meticulous on each visit. Today, 5 years later, Life is good....I am feeling well, a little less endurance then I would like, but I still enjoy walking, Jogging, slow running, swimming, yoga, fishing, volunteering (at Blood Bank and Cancer Center) and Watercolor Art.

This story posted by: **Alan Schulkin**

In 2000 I was diagnosed with testicular cancer and had tandem (back to back) autologous stem cell transplants. It worked! During the next 10 years I saw my two sons graduate high school and college, had the best years of my professional life, traveled to France, Israel and the Dominican Republic, swam 2.5 miles across Lake Washington several times to raise funds for the Puget Sound Blood Center, joined the Board of the Blood Center, and became Board Chair. The latter coincided within days of being diagnosed in late December, 2009, with what soon progressed to AML. Now I’ve been through an allogeneic transplant from an unrelated donor, and again I have defied all odds and seem to be cancer free. I feel so lucky to be a two-time winner and to have been granted so many extra years to be with my family. Besides crediting luck, I credit the fantastic care I’ve gotten at SCCA and Group Health, from doctors to nurses to technicians and even receptionists. What good fortune to live in Seattle and have the best cancer care in the world in my backyard.
This story posted by: **Ronni Shehorn-Maestas**

It took 17 years, but in 2010 I finally reached the magical five-year cancer-free mark, thanks to the Hutch. In 2004, I had burned through all of the standard treatments for Hodgkin’s Disease - radiation, multiple chemo regimens, and an auto stem cell transplant - and needed additional treatment. An allo SCT was recommended, but my only sibling was not a full match. We searched the national and international registries, to no avail. This is when the Hutch entered my life.

My initial Hutch experience, a monoclonal antibody clinical trial, had me flying to Seattle once a week from the San Francisco Bay Area. While my experience with the trial and the Hutch was amazing, ultimately I had advancing disease. I was then introduced to Dr. O’Donnell and his haplo-identical (half match) stem cell transplant clinical trial. Participating in this trial was one of the most difficult decisions of my life. Normally, I am rather conservative. A clinical trial stem cell transplant is anything but conservative. But as one of my favorite doctors reminded me, the bigger the risk, the bigger the reward. And in one of the best decisions of my life, I went for it.

My sister Vicki and I relocated to Seattle - she was my donor, caregiver, nurse, best friend, and so much more. It was a long, difficult six months, but the folks at the Hutch could not have been more wonderful. I am now nearly six years cancer free. But more than that, I’ve launched introtocancer.com - a website to help others navigate cancer’s path, just rode my bike 45 miles in the Livestrong Challenge, am taking my first trip to Italy later this summer, and I’m in school, working on a secondary degree. Thanks to the Hutch, I am not only alive, I am living.

This story posted by: **John Shula**

You have cancer! These words could not be true. I was school teacher, married, with three young sons. A full life ahead. Words can not describe the fear and sadness I felt. Once I got over the shock of my CLL diagnosis, my attitude had to change from a fear of dying to a hope of living. My local Oncologist told me my type of cancer had a long term survival rate of 5 years or less, but there are always those who beat the odds. I planned to be one of them. He sent me to the UW where doctors prescribed a treatment plan. Over the next several years I had several rounds of chemotherapy, but the cancer always returned. Finally, doctors decided to try an Autologous Transplant, using my own bone marrow. The cancer returned a month later. There was one more option. An Allogenic Transplant, where they use the bone marrow from an unrelated donor. This was a clinical trial for my type of Leukemia (CLL), there were not a lot of statistics available for long term survival rate. I was afraid. However, giving up was not an option, so I moved forward with the transplant. The SCCA transplant team searched the world for a donor. Seven thousand miles away, from Brisbane Australia, the team found a Bronwyn. Her cells were infused into me on May 5, 2004. The recovery was long with several setbacks, but 7 years later I am cancer free. Healthier and stronger than I have been in twenty years!!

Here is a link to the Evening Magazine story done about my journey: [http://vimeo.com/15820917](http://vimeo.com/15820917)
This story posted by: Patricia Sobota

My last five years have been happy, sad, and frustrating. My husband Richard (Dick) and I now live in Port Ludlow, WA which is on the Olympic Peninsula. Our view is different every time we look outside; with deer sightings, eagles, cruise ships, mountains water and trees everywhere.

I am singing in the Port Ludlow Chorus and have made wonderful friends in this group. This is the most inspiring activity i have. I am able to keep everyone laughing. My son Allen 40 years old had a stroke on his right side and spent five weeks in the Harborview hospital near the end of October. He is doing well now working again and running in 5k marathons with other transplant recipients from the University of Washington. My younger son Jason has moved to Virginia to work for a year. He came home from Afghanistan last summer well and happy.

My health has had ups and downs with several visits to the hospital. First; I had a laminectomy surgery (4 & 5 lumbar), last September and recovered well. Afterwards, Dick and I drove to Caldwell Idaho for my 50th High School Reunion. When I came home I was due to see my oncologist. I still see him every 6 months. After our visit he arranged for me to have a mammogram. The radiologist found 3 cancer tumors. Then a biopsy and a surgery. I chose to have both breasts removed in order to avoid waiting for another cancer in the other breast. I was in shock and spent Christmas and two more months in deep depression. I hope I'm finally doing better. I decided to attend the reunion to see everyone. I don't have any bad feelings from the transplant. My best to everyone and god bless!

This story posted by: Constance C. Spalding

In September 2004 I went to my general physician for a check up with a few vague complaints. He did not think it was anything significant but ran a blood test anyway. The results were devastating. All three of my blood counts were seriously low. Two days later I had my first bone marrow aspiration and the conclusion was Bone Marrow Failure. I latched onto the comment the doctor made to us, that a Bone Marrow Transplant represented a cure for this disease. At the time Wally and I had been for 33 years. We had six wonderful children, three of whom were married. We lived a wonderful, happy life and no health issues. One of the great ironies of my experience was that ten months prior to my diagnosis, we learned from good friends that their son was battling leukemia. We heard about our local doctors who were treating their son, about the amazing Hutch and their Bone Marrow Transplant program. Our friend encouraged us to move ahead and have all eight of my siblings tissue typed. The anxiety of waiting for the results, and one by one no match, was difficult. Finally the last sibling, was not only a match, but a perfect match. Thus began our journey to Seattle. Our family pulled together, and planned everything to the last detail. We arrived in Seattle on November 5, 2004. I received my transplant on December 14 and was released on St. Patrick's Day, March 17, 2005. I am eternally grateful to everyone at FHCRC for their amazing program, caring people and for my life. I am healthy, happily married 39 years, with six beautiful grandchildren. I am blessed!
Boozhoo, Boozhoo! I was diagnosed with CML in October of 1987. During the procedure as I lay behind an LAF sheet of plastic, I experienced a profound Native Vision. Mistaking it for my life flashing before me, I soon realized that I was witnessing family stories that I had heard when I was growing up. After four nights, I knew that the Spirits were speaking to me, and I began to write down what I had seen. Six years later when my father and I were traveling back to the White Earth Reservation, the Vision returned. It was then that I began a 14-year writing of "Back to the Blanket: A Native Narrative of Discovery." I have been so blessed by the Spirits since then. For 24 years, life has been "normal" and rewarding. My wife and I have celebrated our 43rd wedding anniversary, and I am back in Graduate School working on another Master's Degree with an emphasis on Post-Secondary First Nations Studies, Worldview and Pedagogy! Ahaw!

Not since Alex Haley's Roots has a story probed so deeply into the intimate details of an indigenous American family. Inspired by the events of this Native American author's descendants, Back to the Blanket chronicles seven generations of his Ojibwe "roots.

Written by: William Tafel, Jr.

If you've ever thought one person can't make a difference, or things were so bad you might as well give up, you should meet Bill Tafel. Mr. Bill Tafel, Jr., is a very courageous man who lives and works in Louisville and Jefferson County, KY. He is the son of Bill Tafel, Sr., a longtime personal friend. Bill, Jr. is 36 years old, married to Rebecca Tafel, and the father of three children. He is a stockbroker and, in the spring of 1993, he was diagnosed with leukemia. He returned home to Kentucky recently, after spending nearly 4 months in Seattle, WA, receiving bone marrow transplant treatments.

Bill began to research his disease and he began a crusade to increase the number of potential bone marrow donors. Bill was one of the lucky ones when he received that long-awaited phone call that an international registry had located a donor in France. So far, the treatment has been successful. According to Bill, however, the best treatment for him was the positive attitude he has maintained throughout this trial. He soon realized he could help himself, and others, by registering more people as potential marrow donors....One thing he learned was that American Red Cross blood centers determine the bone-marrow type of people who donate platelets....But for privacy reasons, those names and marrow types aren't always shared with the national marrow registry. A lesson we could all learn from Bill Tafel and those like him is not to allow oneself to become frustrated by the task ahead, and, to redirect all energies to those things which can be altered and controlled and ignore the rest.
CML Survivor 1993 My story started when I was first diagnosed with Leukemia on March of 1993. The initial reports came back and I was told I had Chronic Myelogenous Leukemia Blast Crisis. I knew things were not right, & for the rest of the Day "on my Daughters Birthday" I spent time in the Medical Library learning more on the prognosis. It was tough to stay silent for the evening trying not to take away the joy of my daughter's birthday. The next day I went to the hospital for High Dose Chemo to put me in remission. Three weeks later we had our third daughter Mary Gwen & I were grateful to God for allowing me to recover. The next part of the leg was to find a donor. I did not match up in the US Canada England or Germany. This was nerve-wracking. The call came on my Birthday that I had a potential donor in France!! Wow this is great & that is when we decided to go to the Hutch for the Unrelated Transplant in Seattle. They had done about 600 world wide and the odds are 50/50, but my choices were one & I was ready to go forward. We arrived in Seattle and were pleasantly surprised to have my first Doctor, Fred Appelbaum. I felt confident in the workups and the nurses were fantastic. The Transplant and our Wedding Anniversary came and went around midnight November 20th, 1993. The big transfusion response was anticlimactic, but it was special all the same. The good news today is I am alive, Rebecca my wife and I are still happily married and we have three beautiful healthy kids. Thank you God my doctors & nurses and the National Marrow Donor Program for allowing this to happen.
This story is posted by: **Ryan**

My name is Ryan - I am 11 years old - I like video games and listening to music - My favorite food is popcorn - I play soccer, swim and love to ride my bike ----- I am a Survivor! ----- I was diagnosed with high-risk Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (ALL) in 2000, at the age of 6 months. Unable to find a matching related or unrelated bone marrow donor, we searched every cancer resource available and read every study published. After consulting numerous physicians and countless studies, each with different recommendations, we made the decision to go with an unrelated donor cord blood transplant. Because this procedure was still relatively new at the time, there was little information on this procedure and it's success rate. After interviewing more doctors and institutions and the data we found at the MNDP (www.marrow.org) we made the difficult decision of leaving a great medical institution in California and moved the family to Seattle, WA to have the procedure done at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research (Seattle Cancer Care Alliance).--- This will be my first time back to Seattle, WA since my transplant and I'm excited to see the city of my rebirth, as I was too young to remember any of this. ------ THANK YOU to the "unknown" donor who saved my life, those who prayed for me, the many doctors, nurses, caregivers, friends, volunteers who support this cause and my family who made all this possible. My Name is RYAN and I am a SURVIVOR!

This story posted by: **Nancy Vanerka**

In 1976, upon my 9th birthday, I was diagnosed with AML. Our doctor didn't mention a transplant, since he thought my remission unlikely and I'd have 25% chance of living. One day, my parents went for a walk: the front page news stated the Hutch was doing experimental treatments on children with AML. They asked my only sibling be tested - perfect match. After being at death's door more than once, weekly enduring PAINFUL chemo which hardened my veins and left only foot veins for IVs, remission was achieved. We were told to be in Seattle in four days. I endured isolation in a laminar air-flow room for 50 days, my only consolation being a calendar to mark off the days and a prayer wheel, showing me who was praying for me each hour. My mother was awakened by God's voice twice, and after my release, prevented a test at another hospital, three times saving my life. I was one of two to survive the initial 16-18 on my unit. I look uncommonly healthy, have strong teeth and fingernails, and continued in school without repeating a year- obtaining a double major in college, a masters degree, and just completed 9-months training to launch a non-profit to help orphans, develop organic crops, and provide water for those in need around the world. I am very grateful and appreciative of the loving, intelligent, and supportive staff at the Hutch - so many to thank. Also, "Thanks" to Connie Schorsh for cheering up, my then 11-yr-old donor/sister, by jokes and wheel-chair races in the Hutch tunnel! But I ultimately give credit for my life and good health to Jesus, Who is "Jehovah Rapha," "The God Who Heals ALL Our Diseases." Find me at the reunion or in facebook to share stories and/or natural health resources.
I had my stem cell transplant for ALL PH+ on April 1, 2003. I will be forever grateful to SCCA and UW Medical Center for this life-saving treatment. Although I have and continue to experience issues with GVHD, my life has been blessed in many, many ways. All four of our children are now married and we have 5 wonderful grandchildren who were all born post-transplant. I published a book of poetry entitled Unexpected Interruptions, which documents my journey with cancer. I continue to be active in my church, singing weekly in its choir, and also volunteer at UW Medical Center in several capacities. My wife and I both serve on the oncology council, I volunteer at the Health Information Resource Center, and also share my story with new hires. A special thank you to my donor, Monica, to my wife Eileen, my caregiver, to my children for their love and support, and to long term follow up as they continue to provide excellent care.

My spirit, but not my body was at the reunion. I could not help myself from reading the stories of transplant patient's survival from this on-line piece. My eyes have finally dried up from the stories of amazing people, their caregivers and the life they now truly live. My brother was my donor, and after my transplant in Seattle in 2005, I had many complications - all of which I faced head on like the rest of you, and most times with giggle goggles (humour). Quite simply, we made fun of cancer and it's weirdness. Without this outlet of laughter, I'm most certain the transplant would have nabbed my body and spirit. Finally, six years later, I am cancer free and truly loving my life. AND, I wrote a book about my transplant!!!!! It's called When the World Dropped in On Me. Check out my website: www.candaceweimer.ca. I'm sure most of you will totally relate to my story of good and bad days and how a positive attitude will buy you life. Here is an excerpt from the blog style, easy to read book, that has lots of pictures and hand drawn illustrations... "I am in the hospital being given major fluids before I get my second round of deadly intravenous chemotherapy. This is good stuff (said tongue-in-cheek). Although it looks clear in the bag, it is going to kick the snot out of my body in an effort to kill the condition my condition is in (that's part of a song, isn't it?). To all survivors and caregivers...may each day be its own blessing and may you love like its Valentine's Day every day. With Love, Candace Weimer, 6 year transplant survivor.

Photo: Me, surfing the rock ledge over a lake in British Columbia, Canada, after quadding, climbing a mountain, and crossing a river on an unstable tree-bridge to get there. 
Kind of like transplant - a journey that is rewarded with a beautiful ending for some
Can it be that 20 years have passed since my transplant for CML? I am so grateful to my brother and donor, David, for giving me a second chance at life. I also cannot have survived without the loving care that my patient advocate and husband, Jim, provided me. My daughters, Leslie and Amy, were there for moral support. Leslie and my mom donated platelets. Churches from all over the United States and even foreign countries lifted me up in prayer. I am sure that God must have tired of hearing my name brought to Him so often. I received such excellent care from the doctors and nurses at FHCRC. My life has taken many roads since those days. I have lived in two countries in South America and two cities in Russia. I have had the opportunity to visit Vietnam, Cambodia, China, Germany, the Czech Republic, Austria, Slovenia, Slovakia, Croatia, England, and France. Although my travels have been exciting and interesting, this doesn't compare with the joy I have in getting older. That is one blessing I wouldn't have if not for my BMT. I now have been blessed with 6 grandchildren. I love being Grandma!!! This year is really special to me because my brother and his wife will be joining my husband and me for the reunion. David has now been diagnosed with CML. I understand that we are quite the oddity. He is able to remain in remission due to the fantastic medications which are now available. However, I have been told that should the need arise, I will be able to donate my marrow to him. We do know that I am a perfect match!

Who doesn't love Blue Bell ice cream? Jim and I at the Blue Bell factory in Brenham, Texas.
This story posted by: **Mary Fenton Wendt**

In 1971 I was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (ALL) when I was a child. I had a good 7-year remission before I relapsed once again & the Leukemia had come back. I was a teenager when I entered the FHCRC & was accepted as a candidate for bone marrow transplant. I had a good match (my identical twin sister Rose) & I was young. I was lucky. The transplant seemed difficult for me at the time, but I endured & made it through. I survived. It took about a year to recover from the treatment & other medical difficulties I struggled with so I took extra classes during my hospital stays & during the summer in order to graduate with my graduating class in high school. I made it! Since then, I have gone to college, graduated, met (in college) & married my love & I've been married 25 years—26 years this August. (Married in August 1985)

*This is a photo of me & my sister (donor) many years after my transplant. We have always been & always will be each other's best friend.*

*This photo was taken at my brothers wedding. My sister & I were flower girls (in Hawaii). I was diagnosed with Leukemia just months later.*

This story posted by: **Jerry Witthoft**

I was diagnosed with hairy cell leukemia in 1981 and had my transplant in 1983. All these extra years that I didn't know I'd ever see, have had a few ups and downs. But overall, I'm very thankful for all the good things that I've experienced in my "second life". I got to see my daughters grow up, finish college, get married and give us 4 wonderful grandchildren. On top of that, our oldest daughter became a nurse practitioner in oncology! It seems to me that it doesn't get much better than that. Most of today's "young" people probably don't remember an old television show, hosted by Art Linkletter. I'll always remember one of his quotes: "Things turn out best for people who make the best of the way things turn out". That sentiment sure seems to sum up my experience.

I wish I could join everyone for the reunion. I can never say "thanks" enough times to all the great docs and nurses who saved my life. However, us old retired people need to pinch our pennys! Maybe next time if I'm still around to harrass people in 5 years!
This story posted by: **Jodi Worley-Butler**

I was diagnosed in 1997 and had my BMT in Jan-1998. I was sent to Seattle for a MUD transplant, with bad odds of surviving. Lucky for me I was introduced to Dr. Stephen Schuster Hememotology-Oncology. To this day I am still a patient of Dr. Schuster. Can you believe he even came to Fred Hutchinson To visit me? He was right about FHCRC. They helped me to survive. Since my BMT it's been a long road spiraling the drain with one complication after another. They never told me how sick I would become after transplant. If I get another Cancer I won't go thru treatment for it. I now have a living will and I am a DNR. I appreciate all that everyone has done for me. I'm sick and tired of being sick and tired!

![Brenda Ehling Leslie](image)

**Me before BMT**

This story posted by: **Brenda Ehling Leslie**

After not being able to recover from the removal of a wisdom tooth, I was informed just prior to Christmas 1990 that I had leukemia. I had a compassionate, highly capable oncologist here in Hutchinson, Kansas. After 3 rounds of chemo, I was in remission. Fortunately, my oncologist had insisted I go have a consultation at Fred Hutch "just in case". Prior to this, I had hosted a planning session for my 30th high school class reunion and met a classmate. Bill and I did not know each other during high school, but we made up for that. After I was in remission, our paths crossed again and we began "seeing" each other. Soon, we were discussing marriage and decided to set the date around Christmas 1991. On a trip for Bill to meet my children and to Seattle for me to meet his daughter - literally on the way to Seattle - I knew I was no longer in remission. Upon arriving, I contacted Fred Hutchinson and made arrangements for an appointment. Within three weeks - Almost the very date we had set for our wedding - I had a bone marrow transplant. Another fortunate aspect of all this was that my brother had tested a good match, and was my donor. It was a great success. At my one-year check, the doctor said, "you are a well person. Go home and act like it." I followed his advice and 19 years later am still acting like it and enjoying life - most particularly a surprisingly successful career as a mosaic artist and teacher. I will be forever appreciative of FHCRC for giving me back my health and look forward to retuning for the reunion. As I've mentioned several times, I realize how fortunate I am.