

# Jenna's "Pay it Forward" Blood/Bone Marrow Drive

**November 25, 2009**

**Benet Academy in Lisle**

**St. Jude Commons**

**from 3:00p.m. until 8:00p.m.**



Jenna McKeown is a high school senior at Benet Academy where she plays Tennis and Lacrosse. She is an avid ice skater, and traveled last summer to Spain singing with her choir in some of the oldest and most beautiful cathedrals in the world! Wednesday, October 28 started like any other day for Jenna with current concerns limited to homework, college applications, and weekend activities. By Thursday evening Jenna began her first round of chemotherapy and her battle with leukemia had begun. What started out as a routine doctor's visit for a sore throat and extreme fatigue led to a rapid chain of events that has turned her life upside down. Jenna was diagnosed with Acute Myeloid Leukemia, a very aggressive but curable form of leukemia.

Although the news was devastating, the groundswell of support that Jenna and her family have received from schoolmates, community and people across the country has given them strength to meet this head on. Jenna's mom and dad set the game plan when they said, "We can match this disease step for step until it surrenders."

The first step of Jenna's treatment is chemotherapy and she has successfully completed her first round at the University of Chicago's Comer Children's Hospital. Her indomitable spirit has become apparent to everyone as she has met the challenge of this diagnosis and the rigors of chemo with incredible strength. "Be Positive" is not only the tone that Jenna has set for everyone, it's actually the blood type that literally runs through her veins (B+); a coincidence Jenna jumped on right away.

Her team of doctors is encouraged by the way that her body has reacted to the first round of chemo and her test results are very positive. However, Jenna recently learned that this is a battle that she cannot win on her own. After undergoing two more rounds of chemotherapy, she will require a bone marrow transplant from a matching donor in January. Tests have shown that Jenna's siblings are not matches for her and she will depend on the National Bone Marrow Registry to find a donor.

Jenna's family and friends are mobilizing an effort to add as many members as possible to the Be the Match National Bone Marrow Registry. This is not only to find a match for Jenna, but also to give hope to the thousands of others who are currently searching for a match. Jenna has been receiving blood platelet donations from Chicago blood banks and likely will continue to access their resources. Therefore her family and friends are also mobilizing an effort to replenish the local blood banks as well. In this combined Blood/Bone Marrow Drive, Jenna, her family and friends hope to be able to "pay forward" in some fashion the incredible support that they have already received in this journey. This is how you can help:

**On Wednesday, November 25th, 2009 Jenna's family and friends will be hosting a combination Blood Drive & Bone Marrow Registry Drive at Benet Academy in Lisle, IL in the St. Jude Commons from 3:00p.m. until 8:00p.m. Everyone is welcome to donate blood without an advanced appointment, however appointments for blood donation scheduled beforehand will take priority! To schedule your appointment see instructions below.**

**[https://donateblood.lifeforce.org/itxm/mobile\\_scheduler/register.php?id=002](https://donateblood.lifeforce.org/itxm/mobile_scheduler/register.php?id=002). Enter your information and continue on to make appt. Next you will click on zip code at the top and type in 60532. At the bottom of the page click on Jenna's "Pay it Forward" Marrow and Blood Replenishment Drive. Click on the time you want and confirm .appointment! Thanks for your patience as this is a new system by Lifeforce. Appointments can also be made by simply calling 1- 877-Lifeforce or (877-543-3768).**

**Take a moment to visit Jenna's Life Journey Link available soon to find out more ways you can help! It costs over \$100 to add each new member to the National Bone Marrow Registry and your donations will allow more members to be added to this life saving cause.**

Please consider stopping by the event on the eve of Thanksgiving and join us in "Giving Thanks". The entire McKeown family would like to extend their sincere gratitude and blessings to you and your families!

Blood donors must be age 17 or above (16 with parental consent forms - available in advance by contacting Beth at [Lisauskas@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Lisauskas@sbcglobal.net))

Bone marrow registrants must be between the ages of 18-60 for bone marrow registry. The bone marrow registry takes only five minutes and is a simple inner cheek swab collection. It is important to note that if you are a match for someone, the process can be similar to giving blood. A direct match, if found, is the ultimate gift.

Any questions can be directed to Lifesource at phone: 1- 877-LIFESOURCE or (877-543-3768) .

If you cannot attend but would like to make a financial donation please watch for information on "Jenna's Life Journey" link available soon.