Leukemia patient needs bone marrow match

"If we’re able to find a match for her, we would be giving her the gift of life, and that would be a wonderful gift this time of year."

The testing in the Bronx is of particular importance because African Americans and Latinos are underrepresented in the pool of potential donors on the Be the Match Marrow Registry. Of the 8 million people on the registry, only 500,000 are African American.

"We have a situation where we can help each other, hold each other up," said Austin, who’s now a patient at New York Presbyterian Hospital in Manhattan.

"What I’m asking my fellow sisters and brothers to do is to engage and be a part of this very important effort, not just for me but all of these other African Americans. We as African Americans can save the lives of other African Americans."

A test of Austin’s relatives came up negative as a match for a bone marrow donation.

The search for a suitable donor involves a simple and painless mouth swab that is analyzed at a lab. Those who turn out to be a match will be contacted by mail.

The process of donating bone marrow is also relatively painless, akin to donating blood or a minor surgical procedure.

Austin, who has two children ages 12 and 7 and worked as a senior vice president for the United Way of New York City, was diagnosed with leukemia about three months ago.

"I don’t want to lose my daughter," said Austin’s mother, Natalie Jones, 70. "It’s been tough, but my daughter is very strong. When they put her on the breathing machine in the hospital in September, she took my hand and said, ‘Don’t worry, Mom, it’s part of my journey.’"

Gordon Campbell, Austin’s boss at the United Way, spoke to her yesterday and asked how she was doing.

"Tell everyone I’m doing okay but we really need to find a donor," he said she told him.

"Jennifer’s a phenomenal person," he said. "She’s one of the strongest women I know. Her work really is a passion."

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Bone marrow match drive searches for patient’s savior

BY MIKE JACCARINO
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

YOU COULD be the one to save Jennifer Jones Austin’s life.

The 41-year-old Brooklyn woman and mother of two is suffering from leukemia and desperately needs a bone marrow transplant.

BronxWorks, a Bronx-based social service organization, is holding a testing drive Monday to help find a suitable donor at its community center at 1130 Grand Concourse, between 166th and McClellan Sts. The screening will be held from noon to 6 p.m.

“She’s in a situation where all of her other options have failed, and if she does not get a bone marrow donation, basically, we’re looking at her not living very long,” said Ken Small, development director for BronxWorks.

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