



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Pat Pedraja To Meet The First Match From "DRIVING FOR DONORS" Campaign

St. Petersburg, FL (10/5/07) Pat Pedraja is a very special 12-year-old. About a year ago, he was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia. While receiving chemotherapy, he learned that others were waiting for a marrow match as their last hope to live. When one friend died, Pat did not want this to happen again. So on April 17, 2007, Patrick began DRIVING FOR DONORS. He and his family drove across the country in a special "Donormobile" hosting marrow drives in 32 cities in three months and added over 5,000 donors to the National Marrow Donor Program Registry.

Florida Blood Services (FBS) and the National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP) would like to invite the public and the media to help celebrate Pat's accomplishments and welcome him home on **Thursday, October 11th from 8:30 am - 10:00 am at the FBS main office located at 10100 Dr. M L King Jr St. N. in St. Petersburg.**

One of Pat's first events with DRIVING FOR DONORS has already produced a donor, Jessica Eberl, who donated for a 55 year old male with Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma. At the event, Pat will get to meet Jessica for the first time.

In honor of Pat for the month of October, anyone who donates blood, plasma or platelets at any of our 13 donor centers, can register for the NMDP for FREE!

Prospective donors can call 1-800-68-BLOOD (25663) or click on www.fbsblood.org for FBS Donor Center locations and hours.

"It is a wonderful thing, what Pat has done for the thousands of people needing a bone marrow transplant," said J.B. Gaskins, Vice President of Donor Systems for Florida Blood Services. "He is a genuine hero and young people around the country have a true role model to look up to. He is really concerned with saving the lives of others who need a lifesaving bone marrow transplant."

About National Marrow Donor Program: NMDP's mission is “***We save lives through cellular transplantation – science, service and support.***” Thousands of patients worldwide are waiting for a bone marrow or blood stem cell transplant as their only hope to live. In the United States and Internationally, the NMDP is a global point of access of cellular transplant resources and information for transplant centers, physicians, researchers, patients and their families. All of which is made possible by the generosity of volunteer marrow, peripheral blood stem cell and umbilical cord donors.

About Florida Blood Services: FBS provides for the blood needs of patients at 38 hospitals in Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, and Pinellas counties, through the participation of volunteer blood donors. Over 750 donations are required daily due to the high quality of medical care in Tampa Bay that serves the most critically ill patients throughout west central Florida.

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