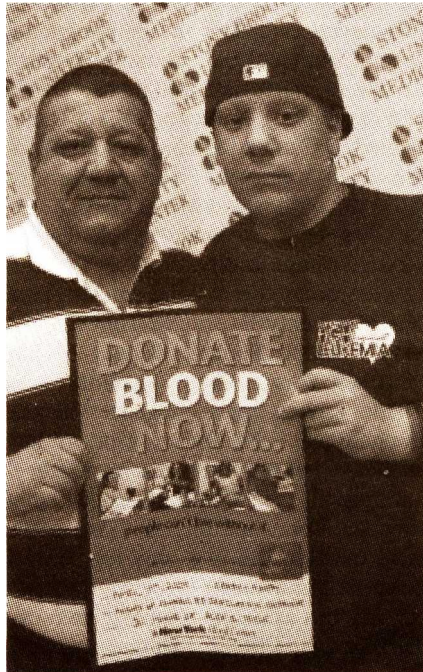


Blood, Marrow Drive Offers Hope for Baseball Player, 15



Lou and Alex Mele

Spring may be synonymous with milder weather and opening day for baseball fans, but for Alex Mele of Coram, NY, a 15-year old baseball player and sophomore at Longwood High School, this season will be a fight to shut out cancer.

Mele, a catcher and third baseman for the Brentwood Bandits and member of the Longwood Junior Varsity Baseball Team, suddenly fell ill last November. He was diagnosed with Acute Myelogenous Leukemia (AML), a fast-growing cancer of the blood and bone marrow.

Alex, who is undergoing chemotherapy, hopes that a bone marrow match may allow him to recover and return to the ball field. But so far, none of his

four siblings is a match. His chance of finding an outside match of similar Italian heritage is 1 in 20,000.

The Knights of Columbus # 1828 of Glen Cove, NY donated the space needed to host a blood and marrow drive for Alex on Tuesday, April 7, in conjunction with Long Island Blood Services (LIBS). Drive hours are from 3:30 to 9:00 PM at 81 Sea Cliff Avenue. Funding for approximately 120 bone marrow screenings by the National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP) was made possible with funding by Glen Cove Cancer Awareness Resource Education Source, Inc., also known as Glen Cove CARES.

Those who cannot make this blood and marrow drive are asked to please donate blood this month, within your own community. Precise matches are needed for people young and old everyday, and you just might be that special match for someone. The best thing you can do is give the gift of life.

"Even if we could help just one kid, it would be well worth it," said Lou Mele, Alex's father.

Any company, community organization, place of worship, or individual may host a blood drive. Blood donors receive free mini-medical exams on site including information about their temperature, pulse rate, blood pressure and hemoglobin level. Eligible donors include those people at least age 16 with parental consent (in NY) or 17 (in NJ), who weigh a minimum of 110 pounds, are in good health and meet all Food & Drug Administration and NY or NJ State Department of Health donor criteria. People over 75 may donate with a doctor's note.

**To donate blood, please call:
Toll Free: 1-800-933-2566
Visit: www.nybloodcenter.org**

