

AIRPORTS

A Gift of Life

LA/Ontario Safety Officer donates bone marrow to save a life.

Story and photo by Harold Johnson, LANews Public and Community Relations Officer

LA/Ontario International Airport Safety Officer Matthew Patrick traveled to New York City in November to meet the person who received his bone marrow donation after a life-extending operation. The two attended a recognition ceremony at Carnegie Hall.

Matthew Patrick joined the bone marrow donation program when he donated blood in New York City after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks. While waiting to give blood, he asked about the bone marrow donor program. He found that joining the program was as easy as giving a blood sample. Donors are placed on a list for possible matches. There is a minimum of six out of 10 items to match when considering a marrow transplant. Matthew became a nine-point match for a patient on the East Coast.

"There is no one else who could have done this," Matthew says. "Many donor candidates wait for decades and are never called."

Jeff Morris, a married, 54-year-old father of two daughters who works for Showtime Networks in New York, was diagnosed with leukemia in 2004. After initial treatment, he went into remission until 2007. At that time, the medical team found a bone marrow match with Matthew.

There are two methods to donate, one surgical and one non-surgical. Matthew chose the non-surgical procedure, in which a new drug, Filgrastim, is used to increase the number of blood stem cells.

"It's a five-day treatment," Matthew says.

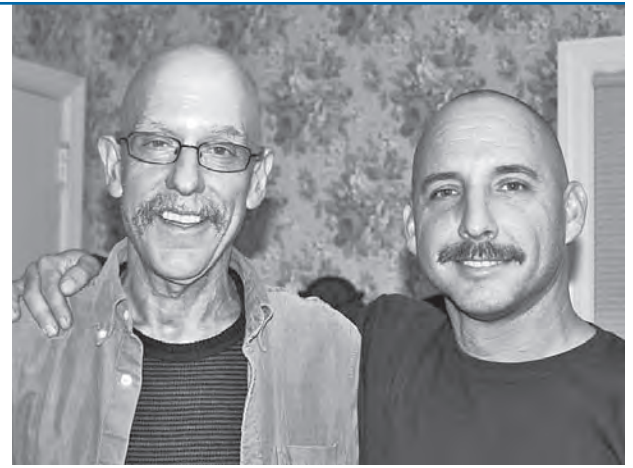
While taking the Filgrastim, he went on light duty for four days. On the fifth day, his blood was drawn and processed, and the precious stem cells were removed. Those stem cells were flown to the recipient's hospital for processing

and given to the patient. Matthew returned to work on full duty.

This past November, Morris and his wife met the Matthew Patrick family at John F. Kennedy Airport in New York and escorted them to Katonah, a neighborhood in Bedford, Queens, to start their visit with dinner.

"During the trip, I met about 200 of Jeff's friends," Matthew said. "All of them were very appreciative and amazed to meet me."

Morris' wife, a former New York City tour guide, was able to get Matthew and his family into some great places quickly, including a special visit with the firemen of Ten House on Liberty Street in New York City. Ten House Fire Station is about 100 feet from the corner of the former north tower of the World Trade Center. Six firefighters at Ten House lost their lives on



From left: Jeff Morris and Matthew Patrick in New York City.

Sept. 11, 2001. Matthew met an actual firefighter survivor of the first-in entry team who still works at the firehouse. Today the station has a rooftop view of Ground Zero.

Patrick is looking into the possibility having a Los Angeles World Airports-wide stem cell donor drive in honor of Morris to help others with cancer.

"Jeff is doing awesome," Matthew says. "My visit there was the first time he had ventured back into the public at large. His concern was being around so many other potential germs. He came through it with no problems, not even a sniffle - a sign that his immune system is strengthening."

Newsbrief

GOLDEN GLOVES:

Lincoln Park Recreation Center, a Rec and Parks facility at 3501 Valley Blvd., near downtown, will host a Golden Gloves boxing tournament from March 17 through March 21.

Men and women ages 17 to 34 can compete at two amateur levels - novice (for boxers who have had six or fewer bouts), and open (for those who have up to 50 contests), with each division having 10 or more weight classifications.

Preliminary rounds will take place March 17 to 19; the novice finals will be held March 20, with the open finals the next day. Matches will begin at 7 p.m. all five days of the tournament, with weigh-ins from 4 to 6 p.m. Spectators are welcome - daily admission will be \$5 per person, with a \$3 parking fee.

Anyone interested in competing can register March 14 between 9 and noon at Lincoln Park, when weigh-ins will be conducted; there is a \$10 entry fee. For more information about the Golden Gloves boxing tournament, call (213) 847-1727.

Tennis, Anyone? Registration is under way for the 59th annual Los Angeles B-C-D Tennis Championships, to be held the weekends of April 11-12 and April 18-19 at the tennis stadium of the Griffith Park Tennis Complex, a Rec and Parks facility at 3401 Riverside Dr.

The event will consist of men's and women's singles and doubles, and mixed doubles competitions. Participants will play in classifications based on their rating from the National Tennis Rating Program (NTRP), and may only enter one division.

The Department's Municipal Sports Section is sponsoring the tournament, which is sanctioned by the U.S. Tennis Association (USTA) and the Southern California Tennis Association; competitors must be current USTA members.

The registration fee is \$35 for singles and \$40 per team for doubles; make checks payable to the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks. Entries should be mailed to the Department in care of Municipal Sports - Tennis, 3900 W. Chevy Chase Dr., Los Angeles, CA 90039, and arrive by the deadline of Friday, March 20 at 1 p.m.

For more information about the 59th annual Los Angeles B-C-D Tennis Championships and tennis programs offered by Rec and Parks, call Cuong Chau in Municipal Sports at (818) 246-4088.

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If you would like to learn more before making a commitment, join us for a reception from 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. on any of the dates below:
February 27, February 28, March 6 or March 7, 2009.