

# about us

Dear Expectant Parent,

Our daughter was a parent's dream, and we hope that your child will provide you the love, pride, accomplishments and great memories that she bestowed upon us.

Natasha was a loving, compassionate, magna cum laude graduate of Cornell University. She never met a person she would not call a friend, traveled the world having studied in Ireland and Spain while in college and taught at the Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar after graduating in 2005. She was diagnosed with leukemia upon returning home from Qatar to attend Yale School of Medicine.

Over the next few years, we learned a lot about the strengths and weaknesses of her treatment. The most important being that your chance for a cure is often directly related to your ability to quickly find a perfectly matched bone marrow donor in the NMDP registry.

The problem is that Natasha was the daughter of an African American father and an Irish American mother, and it is very difficult to almost impossible to find a perfectly matched donor if you're mixed heritage. This is equally true for a high percentage of other minorities.

All seemed lost until her doctors decided to go with a newer procedure using two frozen umbilical cord blood units that matched her. She became the first adult cancer patient to receive a cord blood transplant in Kentucky.

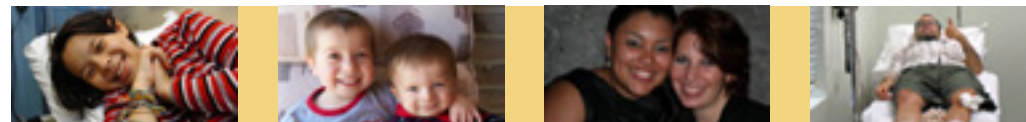
Natasha's cord blood transplant gave her an opportunity to pursue her dream of becoming a doctor. She finished her first year of medical school at Yale before dying from the complications of a bone marrow transplant following the return of her cancer two years later.

The sad fact is that hundreds of people die every year because they were not given the gift that our daughter received. Natasha's Place, the International Mixed Heritage Cord Blood Bank, started it's public donation service to honor her struggle and give kids and adults like her a better chance to grow old and achieve their dreams.

Sincerely,  
Theodore Collins, Ph.D., M.S., M.A., Founder  
Natasha's Place



# your baby's birth will produce big smiles



## what is a stem cell transplant

Your body's stem cells can become any type of cell, such as heart cells, brain cells and immune cells. They keep you alive by replacing your old and injured cells. You will die without healthy stem cells.

People with diseases like leukemia and lupus have unhealthy stem cells. They often will not survive unless they receive healthy stem cells from a donor. This is called a stem cell transplant.

The majority of transplants are done using bone marrow cells from an unrelated donor. Donors are usually found in a registry – an organization that keeps a list of people willing to donate. Because the majority of the people in registries are white, people of mixed heritage and minorities often cannot find a donor in a registry.

Donor cells can either perfectly or partially match the person in need. Most people can't find perfect matches. Those using partially matched stem cells for their transplant may experience an immune response called graft versus host (GVH) if the donor cells realize they are not in the person they came from.

## why is cord blood so important

Cord blood is obtained from the umbilical cord that links mother and child. It is a rich source of the same stem cells found in bone marrow. They, however, offer people of mixed heritage and minorities some great advantages over bone marrow, including:

- It doesn't have to be as perfectly matched to be used in a transplant.
- It demonstrates a much less active graft versus host response and far fewer transplant related deaths.
- At least 1 out of every 3 people born in many major cities is mixed heritage or minority.
- Almost all umbilical cords are discarded after the baby is born, and, when given the choice, most people would rather donate their baby's cord blood than have it thrown away.

Our non-profit, public banking service allows to-be-parents to donate their cord blood to our public inventory. The donation is then listed in a global registry and made available to anyone needing a stem cell transplant.

## how does the public donation process work

### Step 1: Enroll

Go to [www.natashasplace.org](http://www.natashasplace.org) to read more about donating. Then either call us at 1.800.869.8608 or use the website to enroll or download the forms and mail them to us. There is no charge for donating.

### Step 2: Receive Your Collection Kit

We will send your collection kit after you officially enroll – immediately give your ob/gyn or midwife the kit's caretaker's brochure to let him or her know that you want your cord blood collected.

### Step 3: Cord Blood Collection

Cord blood collection is simple, painless and not at all harmful to your baby or you. Your physician, nurse or midwife will collect the cord blood after the delivery using a sterile closed bag system.

You will then call 1.800.869.8608, at any time of the day or night, and they will arrange for a courier service to pick up and deliver what is collected for processing and storage.

Please visit [www.natashasplace.org](http://www.natashasplace.org) or call 1.800.869.8608 to learn more!