



March 2013

UHP Grad Calls on Students, Oshkosh Community to Surpass Donor Registry Record by Julie Russo

Be the Match (BTM), an international program that connects people suffering from life-threatening diseases with potential blood and bone marrow donors, offers all of us a lifesaving opportunity. A patient's doctor can search BTM's vast registry and other registries worldwide to access millions of donors and hundreds of thousands of blood units. Patients with blood cancers like leukemia and lymphoma, sickle cell, and other serious diseases depend on BTM to make these critical connections. Potential donors begin the process with the simplest of actions, a cheek swab. If thereafter the donor is found to be a lifesaving match, he or she is contacted and asked to aid a patient in need. (See www.marrows.org.)

Matchmaker. **Matchmaker:** Jonathan Dudzinski was a University Honors Program (UHP) member and College of Business undergraduate at UW Oshkosh when he first heard about BTM in 2011. A friend asked him—and everyone else in his address book between the ages of eighteen and forty-four—to join BTM's registry. His friend's dream of finding a compatible donor for a former high school baseball coach was never realized "but," Jonathan told us, "I was able to go on and help save another person's life. I then decided to use that experience to convince others to join the registry."

"The first step in the process," he advises, "is to become part of the registry. Doing that involves a brief health questionnaire similar to the one used for donating blood. Your cheek is then swabbed to obtain your DNA. The next step, which roughly one out of one hundred people experience, is when a rep from the National Bone Marrow Registry informs you that you may be a potential match." Jonathan then went to a clinic to have a single vial of blood drawn,

which is used to profile antibodies and test for diseases. "If all of this checks out," he continues, "you are informed that you are a match and asked if you'd be willing to donate. It's about this crucial step that so many people seem to be misinformed. A large portion of the population is under the impression that donating bone marrow is horribly painful but it isn't. This myth most likely stems from the fact that the recipient is often so weak they cannot undergo sedation, and the process of having marrow injected into their body can be excruciating. It's a whole different story for the donor; more than 90% of the time [donating bone marrow] is similar to donating blood or plasma. For the majority, there is neither pain nor recovery time." When asked what it's like to learn that you're a match, Jonathan answers: "In a word, exhilarating. There is really nothing quite like being told that by some random luck, fate, or spiritual intervention you are the only person in the world with the DNA and antibodies to save a person from certain death. There are few things any of us will do in our lives when we are truly the only person to accomplish a task. This was one of those moments for me."

Launching UW Oshkosh's First BTM Drive: True to his word, Jonathan coordinated and launched the first-ever BTM drive at UW Oshkosh on October 18, 2012. Some of the most important goals of that initial effort were "just to find out what worked well, what didn't, and to see whether the campus would be responsive to the cause," he recalls. "It was an extraordinary success! The student body, faculty, and staff were incredibly enthusiastic...and we were able to sign up nearly two hundred potential donors in a single day." Jonathan, a double major in accounting and finance, continues, "That's more than 1% of a campus population of 13,500 in one six-hour event!" Shortly thereafter, he decided to start planning another BTM drive for the spring, and quickly noted improvements that could make the next campaign run smoother and more effectively. "One of the most important lessons we learned," Jonathan says, "was the importance of presenting facts face to face to dispel the misconceptions about donation."

Rematch: Calling All Potential Donors: This was the subject line of an email Jonathan sent to the UHP in November: "Honors Program + Be the Match = Love." Everyone on staff was honored when he approached the UHP to partner with him in reaching out to the Oshkosh campus and community for a "rematch" in April:

**Be the Match / UW Oshkosh Campus
April 24 and April 25
11:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.
Blackhawk • Reeve Concourse • Sage
Student Recreation & Wellness Center**

Whether it is to bolster BTM's registry or to offer valuable assistance as a volunteer—or both!—Jonathan invites you to participate on **Wednesday, April 24**, or **Thursday, April 25**, at one of the four locations listed above. Joining the registry will take just minutes, and all venues will be open from 11:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. If you're interested in volunteering for BTM, Jonathan is busy filling approximately sixty two-hour shifts over the two-day drive. Duties will include helping set up and take down tables and other materials, serving as ambassadors (making presentations to describe the program's mission and what donors are being asked to do), and directing interested individuals to the BTM nurses who will conduct health surveys and swab cheeks. Jonathan also needs help promoting the drive in the weeks leading up to it. As a thank you for their service, volunteers will be invited to a free after-party! Those interested in volunteering or who have general questions about BTM are welcome to contact Jonathan at dudzij73@uwosh.edu or Sara Gosline, President of the UWO BTM Club, at goslis73@uwosh.edu.

To guarantee UW Oshkosh's continued commitment to help expand the BTM registry, Jonathan is also working with students to form an Oshkosh Student Association-recognized club. He envisions liaisons who would coordinate with other student groups and with local organizations and businesses to establish future and even more successful BTM campaigns each semester.

Wouldn't YOU like to be a match? Please support the BTM registry drive on April 24 and 25!

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About Jonathan Dudzinski:

Since graduating from UW Oshkosh in May 2012, Jonathan passed the second level of the CFA Program. "Then," he says, "[Honors Thesis advisor] Dr. Robert Kunkel and I were informed that our research paper had been nominated as 'Best in Track' by a nationally distributed, peer-reviewed journal. As luck would have it, we had already submitted it to a rival publication, the *Journal of Investing*." (The article has since been accepted for publication.)

More recently, he traveled to Washington, DC, to attend the presidential inauguration. He describes the trip as "an awe-inspiring event that truly made me proud to be an American. When President Obama came into view, it was impossible to resist being swept up by the energy radiating from the crowd.... It was [also] impossible to have anything but high hopes for the future and for democracy." Since returning home, he has kept busy attracting investors and hiring personnel for the asset management company he started, Lotnix, LLC.



Jonathan Dudzinski pictured with Patti Wild from the College of Business Professional Development Office at the Be the Match drive in October. (Photo courtesy of UW Oshkosh)

For more information regarding Jonathan's bone marrow donation in 2011 and on last fall's BTM drive, visit: www.uwosh.edu/deptblogs/businessstian/2011/05/11/cob-student-gives-gift-of-life-with-marrow-donation/ and www.uwosh.edu/today/22502/cob-alum-organizes-bone-marrow-donor-drive-after-being-a-match/.

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UHP INFO 24/7

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