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Cancer Survivor Meets Bone Marrow Donor at Cubs Game

By Katie Kim



A cancer survivor and the woman who helped save his life through a bone marrow transplant met for the first time Saturday, and as they are both lifelong Cubs fans, the emotional event took place at none other than Wrigley Field.

Josh Byrd, 31, of Chicago, was diagnosed with a rare form of leukemia in 2014, and doctors gave him a grim prognosis.

“Without the transplant, they said there was a 95 percent chance it would come back,” Byrd said. “She saved my life.”

Stephanie Newton, 35, a mom of two from Tennessee, had been patiently waiting for the chance to help.

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“I know it’s very rare to find a match. Most people find matches from within their family, so that’s why I just went ahead,” Newton said.

She had signed up for the bone marrow registry through non-profit organization DKMS, and heard nothing for five years.

Registry representatives say finding a match is like winning the lottery, and the two of them hit the jackpot.

Both are lifelong Cubs fans, and more than a year after the successful transplant, the two met Saturday for a game.

“I had to tell all my friends he was a Cubs fan before the donation,” Newton said. “It wasn’t like my bone marrow made him that way.”

They shared a moment, and their story, before taking the field

“It’s pretty emotional,” Byrd said of their meeting. “I had my glasses on but I didn’t think I’d cry.”

“There are still a lot of days where I worry about it coming back,” he added.

To which Newton responded, “I’ll always be here if anything happens, and he doesn’t have to worry about it coming back, because you know, I’m in.”

Byrd and Newton hope their story will encourage others to get their bone marrow tested and help save more lives.
