

Marrow program tapping into Web for donors

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Organizers of a Web-based bone marrow donation campaign said they're looking to expand their efforts to recruit more South Asians for the U.S. registry.

The National Marrow Donor Program in Minneapolis conducted an aggressive, youth-oriented campaign on Web sites such as Facebook, MySpace, Friendster and YouTube on behalf of Vinay Chakravarthy, a Fremont, Calif., native with leukemia. Because of a small donor pool, South Asian Americans have difficulty finding find bone marrow matches, the Los Angeles Times reported Monday.

Through the campaign, Chakravarthy found a match among 24,000 South Asian Americans who registered as new donors

Impressed with the results, which increased the pool by 20 percent, the registry is creating a Web site targeting South Asian donors, Regan Hall Reinerth, spokesman for the National Marrow Donor Program, told the Times.

Vinay Lal, a UCLA South Asian studies professor, said South Asian Americans might not have participated widely in philanthropic causes until recently because the community's traditions of charity are more narrowly focused and usually linked to specific religious institutions.

South Asians have "only begun to have a larger sense of community," he said in the Times' article.

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