

Gus Meets with Young Man Raising Awareness on Marrow Donation

On Wednesday, Gus met with Pat Pedraja, 13, in his Washington office to discuss his recent efforts to raise awareness about bone marrow donation.

A young resident of Palm Harbor, Fla., Pedraja was diagnosed with Leukemia in March 2006 and has undergone intensive treatment for the disease. When he found out about the shortage of minority bone marrow donors, he put together "Driving for Donors." This effort took Pat across the United States in 2007, helping him to add 6,000 new donors to the National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP) Registry.

During the Washington, D.C. leg of the Driving for Donors tour last May, Gus met with Pat and joined the NMDP Registry.

Gus said in a press release at the time...

"I am extremely honored to have such a brave and ambitious young man from my district taking up this noble cause...Pat and his family are a testament to the tremendous impact and influence each of us can make for community and country. I am confident that this courageous young man will exceed his goal. I wish Pat and his family the best of luck in the future and encourage all Americans to register for this life-saving program."

Pat has been recognized for his efforts. Most notably, he was honored with the CNN Heroes Viewers' Choice Award. In his acceptance speech, Pat urged others to get involved and to donate to the NMDP.

"I told everybody I wanted to win so I could come up here and tell everybody about the critical need for bone marrow donors. You can be on the national bone marrow registry in over 50 countries. And just doing something so simple, you can be the one to save the life of a kid like me.

"And all of us have the power to make a difference. You just have to never give up and always believe. And I just want everybody to remember that you're never too young to change the world."

Pat was in Washington, D.C., to interview members of Congress for a television show he is working on that focuses on "young people changing the world." Gus was his first interview.

Learn more about Pat's work and track his progress as he continues his nationwide campaign to increase the NMDP Registry at www.drivingfordonors.com.