

For Immediate Release

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**AHEPA Marrow Donates \$14,000 to
Non-Profit Partners in 2020 & 2021**

CHICAGO, IL, September 20, 2021 – Although the AHEPA Marrow Basketball Tournament was cancelled in both 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19, the AHEPA Marrow board has announced three separate financial donations, all of which promote our mission of serving as “A Tournament That Saves Lives.” Specifically, AHEPA Marrow is donating a total of \$7,000 in 2021 to three organizations in the hope that these funds will make a positive impact in their missions. The donation breaks down as follows:

- Be The Match - \$5,000
- Race For Immunology - \$1,000
- Amyloidosis Foundation - \$1,000

Ahepa Marrow also made charitable donations in lieu of the tournament in 2020, matching the dollar amounts of 2021: Be The Match (\$5,000), Race for Immunology (\$1,000) and Amyloidosis Foundation (\$1,000).

Despite the tournament’s cancellation, AHEPA Marrow remained steadfast in its commitment to support organizations that help save lives.

“We’re fortunate to have experienced immense success in hosting the Ahepa Marrow tournament for more than a decade, and are privileged to be able to draw upon our financial reserves to continue to support a number of organizations and individuals to uphold our mission of serving as ‘A Tournament That Saves Lives’” said Dr. Venetos. “We look forward to continuing to use basketball as a way to bring people together and provide financial assistance to our non-profit partners and scholarship recipients in 2022.”

Be The Match: \$5,000

The AHEPA Marrow Basketball Tournament has spent the last 13 years committed to its mission of serving as "A Tournament that Saves Lives." By partnering with Be The Match, we act as a national fundraising event, we recruit eligible donors and we raise awareness of the marrow transplant process. Although the tournament, which serves as our main fundraiser for Be The Match, has not taken place for two years, there continue to be thousands of individuals who are in desperate need of a bone marrow match.

Over the years, AHEPA Marrow has conducted hundreds of drives to save the lives of those in need. But due to COVID-19, Be The Match has announced their shift to strictly online drives. In order to support them as they evolve to meet the needs of our changing world, AHEPA Marrow is donating \$5,000 to Be The Match this year, an amount equal to its 2020 donation.

“We’re incredibly grateful to say that our work with Be The Match has resulted in saving lives.” said Dr. John Venetos, Ahepa Marrow Chairman. “We have had individuals tested at our tournament that have gone on to save the lives of cancer patients, and we hope to continue this journey and add more people to the registry year after year. Our 2020 donation equates to covering the testing, recruitment, lab fees, etc. for about 50 individuals.”

While basketball has served as the method for bringing us together and the tournament entrance fees help AHEPA Marrow donate to Be The Match annually, we continue to encourage the public to participate in the online drives to join the registry and potentially save a life.

Race for Immunology: \$1,000

For the second year, AHEPA Marrow will be making a donation to Race for Immunology, a non-profit founded by Evelyn Argirokastritis, to help support research and education of the immunological community as well as pediatric and adult patients with immuno-hematologic disorders.

“Our goal in 2020 was to use the funds from the Ahepa Marrow Three-Point Contest to donate to this critical organization. Although we haven’t been able to host the tournament, we are proud to be able to donate \$1,000 again this year to help support their important mission,” Dr. Venetos said.

Race For Immunology is currently raising funds for patients who are unable to afford genetic testing that could give them answers to help save their lives. Evelyn is the mother of Elias, a young boy who was born with a rare immunity disorder, which put him in the search for a compatible bone marrow donor. You can follow Elias' journey and learn more of his story by following Elias' Story on Facebook: @HliasFight.

Amyloidosis Foundation: \$1,000

Ahepa Marrow will once again donate \$1,000 to the Amyloidosis Foundation in honor of the late Joseph Peter Bartzis.

Joey was diagnosed with AL Amyloidosis, a rare and incurable blood disease, for which there are only 4,500 cases diagnosed a year. A major challenge is the current lack of early diagnosis in Amyloidosis patients, which is a key factor in disease progression and prognosis. Awareness by the medical community and the general public is essential to turn this around. Increasing the level of support is crucial for research in this underserved disease class, so developmental therapies can be implemented to improve the outlook for amyloidosis patients in the future.

About the AHEPA Marrow Donor Registry

The mission of the Ahepa Marrow Donor Registry is to add persons of Mediterranean descent into our database of prospective donors. The best chance for a leukemia patient is from a family member. Secondly, from relatives, and then from their ethnic group. The chances of finding an unrelated (allogeneic) match are 20,000 to 1. We must add to our database so that any Greek patient has a realistic chance of finding a match.

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