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Nine months ago we brought you the story of Graham Barnell, the Melbourne dad battling an aggressive form of cancer.

His only chance of survival was an expensive stem cell treatment in the US.

Well, with the help of his mate, AFL Premiership coach Alastair Clarkson - and donations from you, the viewer - Graham is enjoying the greatest gift of all.

Recovering from the treatment, Graham is still dealing with complications and his family still owe the hospital more than \$600,000.

If you wish to help Graham and his family raise the remaining funds please visit www.adonorforgraham.com for more details.

You can make postal donations with cheque and money orders payable in Australian dollars to

"A Donor for Graham"
PO Box 268, Wollongong
NSW, 2500
Australia

Electronic and branch banking donations can be made to the following NAB account:

"A Donor for Graham"
BSB: 083-295
A/C: 75433 8243
Hampton Street Branch
440 Hampton St, Hampton
VIC, 3188

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Stem cells give second chance

Stephen Lunn
Social affairs writer

THE simple act of sitting with his family on the couch of his suburban Melbourne home is more than Graham Barnell would have dared dream about six months ago.

But after a two-year odyssey through the darkest ravages of a rare and deadly form of leukemia, Mr Barnell is apparently cured, thanks to a revolutionary procedure only now emerging in the US.

Having spent nine months searching for a compatible bone-marrow donor among the 11 million people registered worldwide for a transplant and being told he had weeks to live, Mr Barnell had all but given up hope.

His form of myeloid leukemia affects fewer than six adults a year in Australia and cannot be cured by chemotherapy.

The normal channel for bone-marrow donation, a sibling, was not an option for the adopted Mr Barnell.

A number of times doctors told him and his wife of 12 years, Samantha MacRae, to go home and try to enjoy some quality time with their children Jack, 7, and Poppy, 3.

Instead, Mr Barnell took the chance of his life and travelled to Seattle to become the eighth person in the world to undergo a pioneering transplant technique that uses stem cells grown in a laboratory from a donated umbilical cord to regenerate bone marrow.

Ms MacRae went with him, but the couple had to make the harrowing



Odyssey: Graham Barnell with wife Samantha and children Jack and Poppy at home in Melbourne yesterday

decision to leave their two children behind. In the end, they were away for seven months.

Ms MacRae predicted yesterday that the oncologist behind the radical technique, Colleen Delaney, would win a Nobel prize.

"For adults who receive cord blood transplants there is normally a 50-day period before the blood cells start to work on their own," Ms MacRae said.

"But Dr Delaney gets the stem cells to start multiplying in the lab before they are transplanted. This means they start reproducing and repopulating the bone marrow within 20 days.

"She's having enormous success: about 90 per cent, compared to other treatments that achieve about 30 per cent. It's early days but so far only one patient hasn't made it.

"The latest test results show Graham's completely clear. When we got those results in November it was the most fantastic news we've ever had. I now feel confident he has a great chance of surviving long term. He just needs to get his strength back."

Mr Barnell and Ms MacRae

hope the treatment quickly becomes mainstream, because it cost them \$US910,000 (\$1.345 million). They have raised about half through friends and donations but are struggling to find the rest.

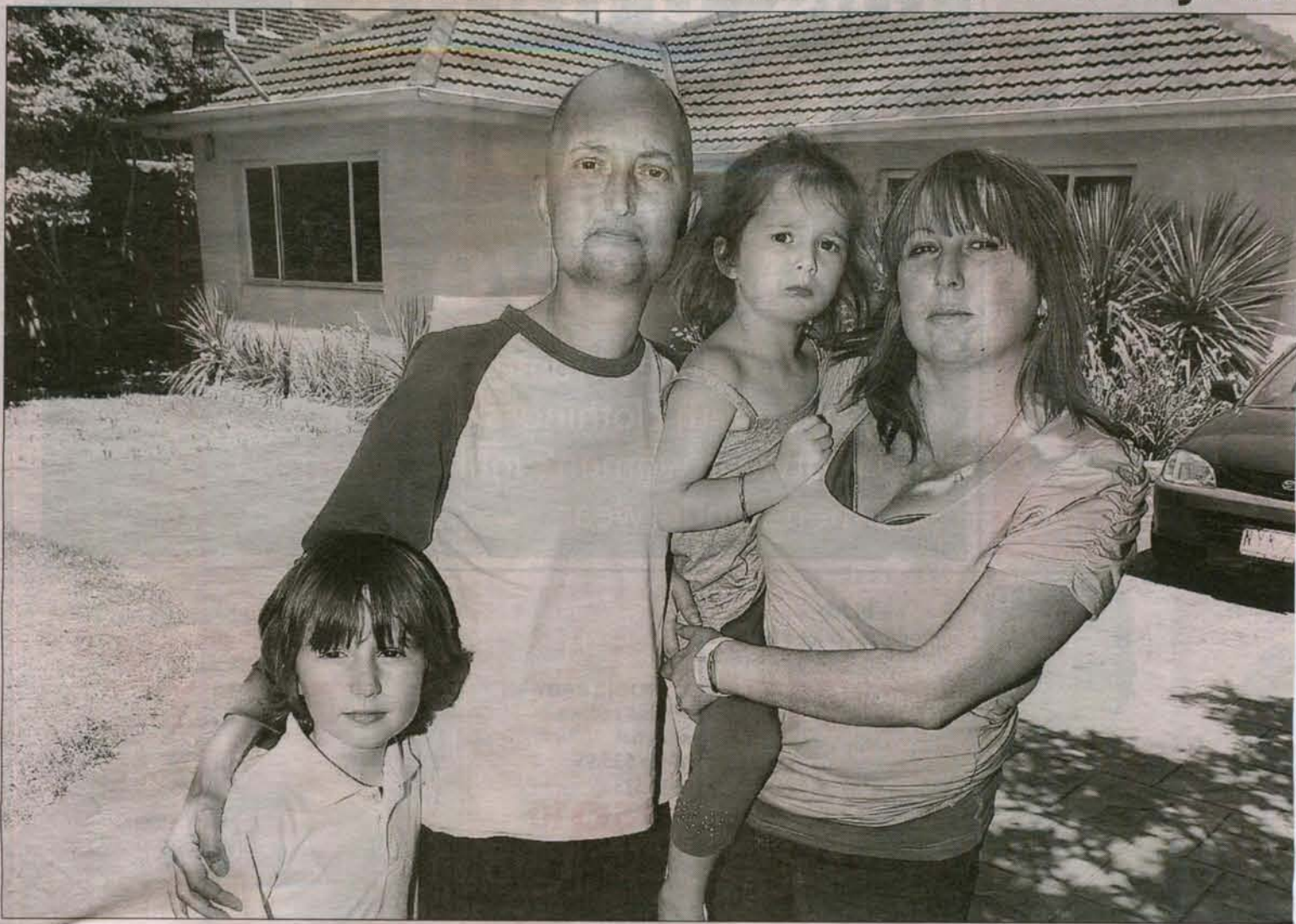
An emaciated but buoyant Mr Barnell is still dealing with a range of infections. In the past fortnight he has had three operations on his knee for septic arthritis.

His body is still getting used to having someone else's bone marrow.

"A year ago I was having to try and deal with the idea I wasn't going to see my kids grow up, and I can tell you that is a really difficult thing to do," Mr Barnell said.

"But then to be given the news that you will, after all — well, nothing beats that."

Graham Barnell's family risk losing their home after it cost \$1.3 million to save his life. But his wife says ...



Loving family: Graham Barnell at home with his wife Samantha and children Jack and Poppy. Picture: IAN CURRIE

He's worth every cent

Kamahl Cogdon

A \$1 MILLION medical gamble has saved Melbourne dad Graham Barnell's life, but it's left his family facing bankruptcy.

Mr Barnell, 43, was just weeks from death when he travelled to the US for a last-chance experimental treatment for his rare and aggressive leukemia.

His young family mortgaged their modest Moorabbin home, while friends and family raised \$300,000 to help save his life.

The new treatment — involving the transplant of umbilical cord stem cells — worked, and the father of Jack, 7, and Poppy, 3, is now free of the killer disease.

But his second chance at life has come at a huge financial cost.

Complications after the August 5 transplant pushed the bill to more than \$1.3 million, of which the family still owes more than \$600,000.

Mr Barnell, still weak from the transplant and subsequent infections, said he struggled with the decision to risk his family's financial future.

"I felt very guilty about it all, putting my family in such debt," he said. "I had to give it a lot of thought." If the worst happened he didn't want to leave his family with a massive debt. "Leaving them without a father would have been bad enough," he said.

But the decision was clear-cut for his wife, Samantha MacRae. "It could push us to bankruptcy, definitely, we have considered that," she said.

"I thought, this is too important, this is our family. I don't think I could have faced the kids if we didn't try everything."



High-flying mates: Graham Barnell with Hawks coach Alastair Clarkson and captain Sam Mitchell.

Mr Barnell was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia in April 2007. His desperate dash to the US a year later followed months of heartbreak and failed attempts to find a donor for a bone marrow stem cell transplant in Australia.

He has a rare tissue type and no match could be found among the 11 million people on bone marrow registries worldwide.

His family's frantic search for alternative treatments led to the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Centre in Seattle, which was testing the transplant of stem cells from umbilical cord blood.

Such transplants are not done in adults in Australia because cord blood does not contain enough stem cells.

But the Seattle centre has developed a technique to reproduce the stem cells up to 800-fold before they are transplanted.

The treatment was a success

but Mr Barnell's new stem cells started attacking his body.

He became so ill Ms MacRae called the children to the US to say goodbye.

But he fought back with another experimental treatment and came home in October.

The couple said they were overwhelmed by support, including from Hawthorn coach and friend Alastair Clarkson, and St Leonards College, where their children go to school and kindergarten.

Hawks captain Sam Mitchell donated a car he won at the end of last season for auction and an anonymous donor sent \$10,000 and the promise of a holiday when Mr Barnell's health allowed.

"People have just been amazing," Mr Barnell said. "It restores your faith in humanity."

Net link: www.adonorforgraham.com

The Herald Sun
January 14, 2009

Dad bounces back from brink

Lisa Edgerton

SOME believe hope can heal what doctors cannot.

Others are certain love is the remedy.

For Graham Barnell it was a combination of the two that led him to remission; that and a rare procedure performed at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle.

On the slow road to recovery, Mr Barnell, 43, is relieved to be back in his Moorabbin home with wife, Samantha MacRae and two children Jack, 7, and Poppy, 3.

"I'm very happy to be home," Mr Barnell said.

"After a traumatic year spent mostly in hospital, hopefully the worst is finally over."

In April last year, Mr Barnell was diagnosed with a type of acute myeloid leukemia, a rare form of cancer that affects fewer than 10 Australians annually.

Given a poor prognosis, he was told he would need a bone marrow transplant if he were to have any chance of long-term sur-

Parents rally to help



Council says no to land sale

Our report on Graham Barnell's plight from earlier this year.

vival. Not one of the 11 million people registered as potential donors was a match.

The next step was a stem cell transplant.

Experience in this technique is limited, with 70 per cent of patients treated in Australia not surviving.

But giving up was not an option and the couple were determined to find an alternative.

After months of research Ms MacRae found a technique with a 90 per cent success rate performed in the US.

It was expected to cost more than \$500,000 for the procedure

but the couple didn't care about the cost.

"I was thrilled to find another option that had such a great survival rate," Ms MacRae said.

An application to the Federal Government's Medical Treatment Overseas Program was rejected, prompting the couple to raise the money.

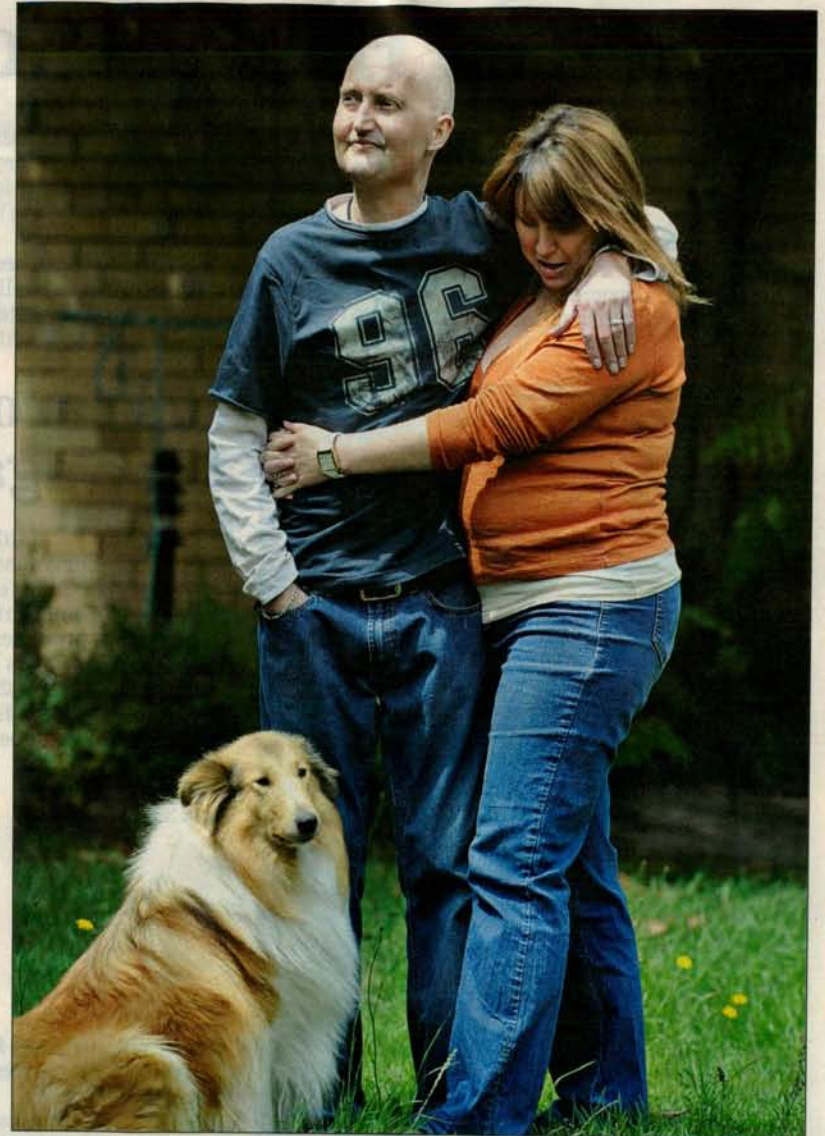
By re-mortgaging their house and with community support they raised the \$419,000 deposit needed to begin the procedure in April.

Parents at St Leonard's College also banded together to help raise the money to support the life-saving trip. Mr Barnell's son Jack attends the school's Brighton campus.

Now 15kg lighter, Mr Barnell said he was looking forward to a quiet family Christmas and an uneventful year.

Leukemia survivor Graham Barnell, with wife Samantha MacRae, has returned home after treatment in Seattle.

Picture: CHRIS EASTMAN. N23MS939



a donor for graham

2008 Benefit Raffle

List of Prizes



**Help rid Graham
of a relationship
he can do without!**

www.leukaemia.org.au



1st Prize—LG Plasma 50" TV (Value \$2,374)

HD, XD Engine, True Motion 100Hz, 14 Bit Processing, 3 HDMI Input & Invisible Speaker.

Thanks to JB HI-FI, Wollongong, NSW.



2nd Prize—Swiss Watch (Value \$1,420)

Frederique Constant Genève "Art Deco" Watch. Quartz movement, roman numerals & sapphire crystal glass.

Thanks to Georgina McLean & the Avstev Group, Aust.



3rd Prize—Hawthorn Football Jumper

Framed and signed by the 2008 Premiership team.

Thanks to Alastair Clarkson & the Hawthorn Football Club.



4th Prize—McLaren F1 Memorabilia

Caps & photos framed and signed by Heikki Kovalainen & Lewis Hamilton, winner of 2008 Australian Grand Prix.

Thanks to Kate Letson & Mercedes Benz Australia.



5th Prize—McLaren F1 Memorabilia

Caps & photos framed and signed by Heikki Kovalainen & Lewis Hamilton, winner of 2008 Australian Grand Prix.

Thanks to Kate Letson & Mercedes Benz Australia.



6th Prize—Jason Ackermanis' Footy Boots

Framed and signed by the Brownlow medal-winning and triple premiership AFL player.

Thanks to Jason Ackermanis



7th Prize—Murray River Break (Value \$300)

2 nights for a family of 4 or 3 nights for a couple. Includes accomm, continental breakfast, wine & chocolates.

Thanks to Judy and Peter Martin



8th Prize—Winery Package (Value \$250)

Rutherglen winery tour by Cadillac, 1 night's B&B accommodation & lunch.

Thanks to Denise Chanter.



9th Prize—iPod Nano (Value \$199)

8gb Black iPod Nano.



10th Prize—Brisbane Football Jumper

Signed by the 2008 NRL team.

Thanks to Sue MacRae.



11th Prize—South Sydney Football Jumper

Signed by the 2008 NRL team.

Thanks to Scott Geddes & the South Sydney Rugby League Club



12th Prize—Wests' Football Jumper

Signed by the 2008 NRL team.

Thanks to Damian MacRae.



**Help rid Graham
of a relationship
he can do without!**

www.adonorforgraham.com

www.leukaemia.org.au



You can make a difference

Graham Barnell is 42 years old, the husband of Samantha and the father of two young children, Jack and Poppy. Graham normally resides in Melbourne, but has been in Seattle, USA since April 2008 undergoing life saving medical treatment for Acute Myeloid Leukaemia. There is no effective treatment for this condition in Australia.

You may have seen Graham's plight on television or in the local media. To date, fundraising efforts from family, friends, local businesses and strangers within Australia, have allowed Graham to undergo a pioneering stem cell transplant in the United States.

The total cost of this treatment has significantly exceeded original expectations of US\$500,000 and with a US\$5,000 per day hospital bill, Graham and his family desperately need your help in giving him his best shot to survive and have a future with his two young children.

This is where you come in.

More funds are urgently needed to help pay for this life saving treatment so please consider making a donation. All you need to do is visit Graham's website and click 'Donate':

www.adonorforgraham.com

Alternatively, a cheque can be mailed to:

**A Donor for Graham
PO Box 268
Wollongong NSW 2500**

To learn more about Graham's illness and follow his progress, visit his website.

www.adonorforgraham.com

Hope for cancer victim in US

Holly O'Connell

28May08



Graham Barnell and his wife are in the Seattle in the US to try to get a specialized treatment for his rare form of cancer.

MOORABBIN man Graham Barnell has made it to Seattle for treatment of a rare cancer. The father of two was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukaemia in April last year.

Mr Barnell and his wife Samantha MacRae searched tirelessly for a bone marrow match, but Mr Barnell is adopted and has no known siblings to be tested. Time ran out and now Mr Barnell is bracing for a final treatment a double cord blood transplant. The transplant would replace his body's bone marrow with cells from umbilical cords.

The family launched a fundraiser to get Mr Barnell to the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Centre in the US, where the operation has an 88 per cent success rate and a \$500,000 price tag. So far, the campaign has raised almost \$200,000, with community support in the form of concerts, discos and art auctions. It was enough to get Mr Barnell to Seattle to start treatment.

In his latest blog entry, Mr Barnell said he was feeling well after his recent round of chemotherapy and was awaiting a bone marrow biopsy. "The bone marrow biopsy has been postponed," he wrote. "It would have been a miracle of modern medicine if I had been well enough for it. "I'm surprised by the amount of energy I still have. Usually by this point with such a low red blood cell count you tire very easily."

Speaking from Seattle, Ms MacRae said her husband had finished chemotherapy and was waiting for his white blood cells to recover. "Then on to a bone marrow biopsy to make sure his marrow is clear of leukaemia and then the transplant," Ms MacRae said. "We feel so grateful to all the people who supported us and it is amazing to us that we are here in Seattle".

To donate to Mr Barnell's treatment, go to www.adonorforgraham.com.

Tuesday, May 6, 2008

Media Digs Deep for Clarko

It's not often a coach is stuck for words, especially after his side has walloped Collingwood. But Hawthorn's coach Alaistair Clarkson wasn't saying a word at Saturday's after match conference until some money changed hands.

Clarkson produced a tin and said he wasn't talking until members of the media emptied their pockets and made a contribution. "Cash for comment, it's probably illegal." He quipped, "I am not going to talk until you all empty your pockets."

But it was all for a good a cause. Clarkson is a close friend of Graham Barnell, who has a rare, aggressive form of Leukaemia. He is now being treated in the US, but the cost is more than \$400,000.

The Hawks coach helped organise a tin rattle outside the MCG on Saturday.



Friday, May 2, 2008

Hawks show heart before tearing into Pies

Kamahl Cogdon

HAWK Sam Mitchell is not the only one going into battle at the MCG this weekend.

As the Hawks prepare to take on Collingwood, a small army of St Leonards College students and parents will rally outside for a brave dad facing his own fight on the other side of the world. Graham Barnell, whose children Jack, 6, and Poppy, 3, attend the Brighton school and kindergarten, has a rare, aggressive form of leukaemia.

Mr Barnell's best chance of survival rests with a relatively new stem-cell transplant technique performed in a leading US cancer centre. The treatment has a 90 per cent success rate at Seattle's Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Centre but is rarely done here.

Mr Barnell, 42, was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukaemia just over a year ago and, although he is in remission after chemotherapy, relapses are common with this type of leukaemia. A stem-cell transplant offers the chance of a cure but two major hurdles stand in the way of him getting a regular transplant using cells from bone marrow.

Mr Barnell was adopted and has no siblings to donate matching bone marrow. He also has a rare tissue type for which no match has been found among the 11 million people on bone marrow registries worldwide.

Mr Barnell's family's desperate search for alternative treatments led them to the US and transplants using umbilical cord stem cells.

The doctors take stem cells from umbilical cord blood and reproduce them up to 800-fold in a lab to ensure there are enough cells for transplant into adult patients.



Mr Barnell and wife Samantha left for Seattle last week, leaving the children with their grandmother. "We've told them this is daddy's chance to get better," he said from Seattle. "Even though we are going to be away and it's going to be hard, this is daddy's chance to have a normal life, and not have to worry about going into hospital anymore."

Mr Barnell is being assessed and hopes to have the transplant on May 23, his son's seventh birthday. But his second chance comes with \$450,000 cost. The Barnells have borrowed much of the money against their home and about \$180,000 has been raised through fund raising events and a website. But they are still short of their target.

Hawks coach and close friend Alastair Clarkson has helped organise tomorrow's MCG fundraiser, which will see about 40 students, 20 parents and 10 Hawthorn footballers rattle tins outside the ground from midday until just before the bounce.

"I have got so many people behind me, not just family and friends but complete strangers," Mr Barnell said. "It has been just absolutely incredible."

Net link: www.adonorforgraham.com

Mordialloc Chelsea Leader

Students dance to help Graham Barnell

Belinda Fraser

23Apr08

A DISCO fundraiser held at St Leonard's College on April 11 raised \$22,000 to help send Graham Barnell to Seattle for a life-saving double-cord blood transplant.

Mr Barnell, whose son attends St Leonard's Brighton campus, was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukaemia in April last year. The treatment will cost \$500,000. More than 100 families attended the fundraiser.

Money was raised through a sausage sizzle, the takings from the disco, a raffle of art work created by Year 1 students, individual donations and an art auction. The art was painted by children from the school's Early Learning Centre, and each painting represented one of the four seasons. The painting of spring sold for \$4300, summer for \$1850, autumn for \$950 and winter for \$4100.

To donate, go to www.adonorforgraham.com.

Mordialloc Chelsea Leader

Cancer patient's plea for help

Holly O'Connell

02Apr08



Graham Barnell with his wife Sam and children.

TIME is running out for Moorabbin father-of-two Graham Barnell.

In April last year Mr Barnell, 42, was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukaemia while on a holiday with wife Samantha MacRae and their children Jack, 6, and Poppy, 3.

After three rounds of chemotherapy and futile attempts to find a match among the 11 million bone marrow donors worldwide, Mr Barnell is braced for the final avenue of treatment. He is hoping for a double cord blood transplant, which would replace his body's bone marrow with bone marrow-forming cells from umbilical cords.

The procedure has only a 30 per cent success rate in Australia, and would completely wipe out his immune system, putting him at risk of life-threatening infections. "I've really got to be as fit as I can. Your heart and lungs take a bit of a hammering," Mr Barnell said.

Last week doctors told him his cancer was again in remission, so he was eligible for the operation but it had to be quick. "Chances are (the cancer) will come back soon. If it comes back I've got no chance of having the operation," Mr Barnell said.

No Melbourne hospital can do the procedure until July and the operation is "pencilled-in" only at Sydney's Westmead Hospital.

A better chance at life for Mr Barnell lies with the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Centre in Seattle, US, where the operation has a 90 per cent success rate. But that success rate comes with a \$500,000 price tag. "It's not impossible (to raise the money). We're waiting to see what happens," Mr Barnell said.

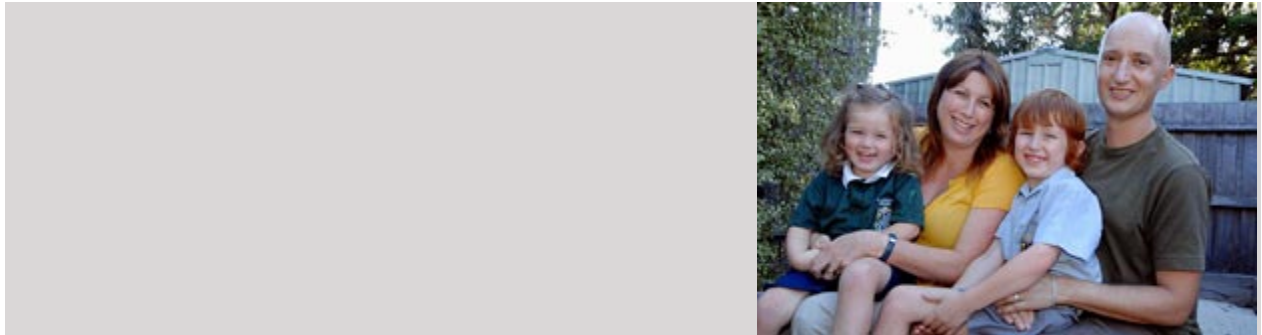
Ms MacRae said her husband of 11 years needed the operation either in Australia or America by the end of this month. "The money is so much it just seems like there's no way we could raise it, but we're hoping for something big to happen," Ms MacRae said.

To donate to Mr Barnell's treatment visit www.adonorforgraham.com.

Bayside Leader

Parents rally to help Brighton family

01Apr08



Graham Barnell with his wife Samantha MacRae and children Poppy and Jack.

PARENTS at St Leonard's College have banded together to raise money in the next two months to try to save the life of one of their own.

Graham Barnell, 42, was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukaemia in April last year while on a holiday with wife Samantha MacRae and their children Jack, 6, and Poppy, 3.

After three rounds of chemotherapy and futile attempts to find a match among the 11 million bone marrow donors worldwide, Mr Barnell's best hope is a double-cord blood transplant. This has a 30 per cent success rate in Australia, but a 90 per cent rate at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Centre in Seattle. Treatment there will cost \$500,000.

St Leonard's parent Ross Walker said the group formed after learning of Mr Barnell's plight.

Jack attends St Leonard's Brighton campus. "When we found out we thought there's got to be something we can do here," Mr Walker said. "In a perfect world we'd love to be able raise half a million dollars, but it might be only a fraction of that. Whatever we can do will help." The group is planning series of fundraising events involving high-profile contacts and St Leonard's parents, and is also hoping a local "white knight" might emerge.

Doctors have told Mr Barnell he is eligible for the operation because his cancer is once again in remission but it has to be quick. "Chances are (the cancer) will come back soon. If it comes back I've got no chance of having the operation," the Moorabbin father said. "It's not impossible (to raise the money). We're waiting to see what happens," Mr Barnell said.

Ms MacRae, Mr Barnell's wife of 11 years, said her husband needed the operation by the end of this month. "The money is so much it just seems like there's no way we could raise it, but we're hoping for something big to happen."

To donate: visit www.adonorforgraham.com

Mordialloc Chelsea Leader

Desperate for surgery cash

Holly O'Connell

31Mar08



Graham Barnell from Moorabbin with wife Sam Macrea and children Poppy, 3 and Jack, 6.

TIME is running out for Moorabbin father-of-two Graham Barnell.

In April last year Mr Barnell, 42, was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukaemia while on a holiday with wife Samantha MacRae and their children Jack, 6, and Poppy, 3.

After three rounds of chemotherapy and futile attempts to find a match among the 11 million bone marrow donors worldwide, Mr Barnell is braced for the final avenue of treatment. He is hoping for a double cord blood transplant, which would replace his body's bone marrow with bone marrow-forming cells from umbilical cords.

Last week doctors told him his cancer was again in remission, so he was eligible for the operation but it had to be quick. "Chances are (the cancer) will come back soon. If it comes back I've got no chance of having the operation," Mr Barnell said.

But no Melbourne hospital can do the procedure until July and the operation is "pencilled-in" only at Sydney's Westmead Hospital. The procedure has only a 30 per cent success rate in Australia, and would wipe out his immune system, putting him at risk of life-threatening infections. "I've really got to be as fit as I can. Your heart and lungs take a bit of a hammering," Mr Barnell said.

A better chance at life for Mr Barnell lies with the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle, US, where the operation has a 90 per cent success rate. But that success rate comes with a \$500,000 price tag. "It's not impossible (to raise the money). We're waiting to see what happens," Mr Barnell said. "The money is so much it just seems like there's no way we could raise it, but we're hoping for something big to happen," Ms MacRae said.

She said her husband of 11 years needed to have the operation in either Australia or America by the end of this month.

To donate to Graham's treatment visit www.adonorforgraham.com

Omnigraphics Billboards

The following billboards, provided by Graham's employer, have appeared around Melbourne:



Preston, VIC



Box Hill, VIC

Gig for Graham

At the Phoenix

Address: 37 Cavendish Square, London, W1G 0PP

Date: Thursday 10th April 2008

CHARIOT
LOVE MY CRIME
3AM
ED HUDSON BAND

turning order tbc

Doors: 7.30pm - admission by donation

Tube: Oxford Circus

www.chariot-rocks.com, myspace.com/lovecrime,
www.3am.uk.com, www.edhudson.piczo.com

Performing for the benefit of Graham Barnell
www.adonorforgraham.com



RECORD RELEASE EVENT Acoustic Leukaemia Benefit Show

Thursday 15th May

@ Hard Rock Cafe

50 Old Park Lane

London, W1

+44 20 76290382

Admission is £10

There will be acoustic performances by all the bands and
an auction/raffle with many great prizes/memorabilia etc.

This is also a benefit for Leukaemia Charities
and for former bandmate, Graham Barnell.

...also please check out the links below.

Esquires BEDFORD

A GIG FOR GRAHAM

"adonorforgraham.com" benefit show



Graham Barnell (former bassist with
Feline Groove) and ex-Bedford lad
has Acute Myeloid Leukaemia and
desperately needs a life saving bone
marrow operation. The operation
alone will cost £280,000.

Without financial help...
Graham is likely to die.

Please help by attending this
performance and give what you
can afford.



FEATURING ACOUSTIC PERFORMERS BY:

THE QUIREBOYS
CUTTING OUT
THE SWAMIS
THE A BAND
AMY LEE
CHRIS CORNEY
MAX MILLIGAN
AND OTHERS

ADMISSION £5
(MINIMUM DONATION)
ADVANCE TICKETS AVAILABLE FROM
REQUIRING THE MINIMUM DONATION

SUNDAY 20th APRIL 3pm

In association with the Australian Leukaemia Foundation and www.adonorforgraham.com

Design: www.bandedgroup.com



Anglia

Bedford man's bid for life-saving op

A critically ill man is in a race against time to fund the treatment which could save his life.

Graham Barnell suffers from a rare form of leukaemia and he believes his best hope of survival is an operation in America.

Mr Barnell, originally of Kempston near Bradford, now lives in Melbourne, Australia and is desperately seeking cash to help fund the life-saving op.

The operation will cost around \$500,000 Australian. In Bedford, his mother, who is not in the best of health herself, can only keep in touch with him by phone as friends try to raise the huge amount of money the operation will cost.

Now Beryl Barnell is appealing for help in raising the cash that may help save her son.

© Copyright ITV plc



Graham Barnell and his wife

Public rally to help man with cancer

Holly O'Connell

THE community has turned out in force to help a Moorabbin man in his race against cancer.

Last week Graham Barnell and his wife Samantha MacRae held a bone marrow donor drive at St Leonard's College in Brighton East in a desperate bid to save his life.

In April Mr Barnell was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia, a rare and dogged form of the disease.

Despite two successful courses of chemotherapy, the 42-year-old needs a bone marrow transplant to treat the reoccurring condition.

Because Mr Barnell is adopted he does not have any known siblings who can be tested, making it difficult to find a bone marrow match.

He does not match any of the 11 million people registered on the worldwide donor list.

The chances are slim, but 29 people volunteered for blood tests at the donor drive and now the family is waiting for the results.

"The fact that people aren't just

donating their time, but their blood as well has just been fantastic," Mr Barnell said.

People came from all over Melbourne to help her husband, Mrs MacRae said.

"It was overwhelming - it really restores your faith."

Mrs MacRae said her family suspected Mr Barnell had a South American background and so she contacted South American groups in Melbourne to find possible candidates.

"Ethnic groups aren't really well represented on the register, so it makes it hard," Mrs MacRae said.

Hawthorn resident Ana Martinez said her Hispanic background prompted her to register and get tested at the donor drive.

"If it matches, you can save a life. Today, it's Graham but tomorrow it could be any of us," Mrs Martinez said.

"You just think someone so young is going through that and having no direct family."

Can you help?

For information on becoming a bone marrow donor visit <http://www.abmdr.org.au> or phone 9694 0101.

Making no bones about being a donor



WHY donate?

Barbara Nicholson, of Brighton East, felt compelled to join the Bone Marrow Donor registry after hearing the plight of Graham Barnell.

Mr Barnell is searching for a suitable donor after being diagnosed with the rare acute myeloid leukemia in April.

Ms Nicholson's daughter Hana attends school with Mr Barnell and Samantha MacRae's son Jack.

"I did it because of Samantha and Graham," Ms Nicholson said.

"I have two girls who are healthy so I have no idea what they are going through."

Ms Nicholson said the thought of being a potential bone marrow match outweighed the fear of pain.

"I've given birth to two girls so a bit of pain doesn't scare me," she said.

"It's not a question of why would I donate? The question is why wouldn't I?"

Moorabbin Leader
August 22, 2007

Samantha MacRae, Graham Barnell and Barbara Nicholson.

Picture: TANYA FRY N08MS201

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Race against cancer

**Bone marrow
transplant is
his only hope**

Matt Doran

THE family of a Moorabbin man in a race against cancer has made a plea for bone marrow donors in a desperate bid to save his life.

Graham Barnell's world caved in when he was diagnosed with leukaemia during a family holiday at Aireys Inlet over Easter.

The cancer came on by stealth — the only symptoms were an elevated heart rate and a touch of the common flu — but at least it was caught in time.

Four to six weeks later and he'd have been dead, doctors said.

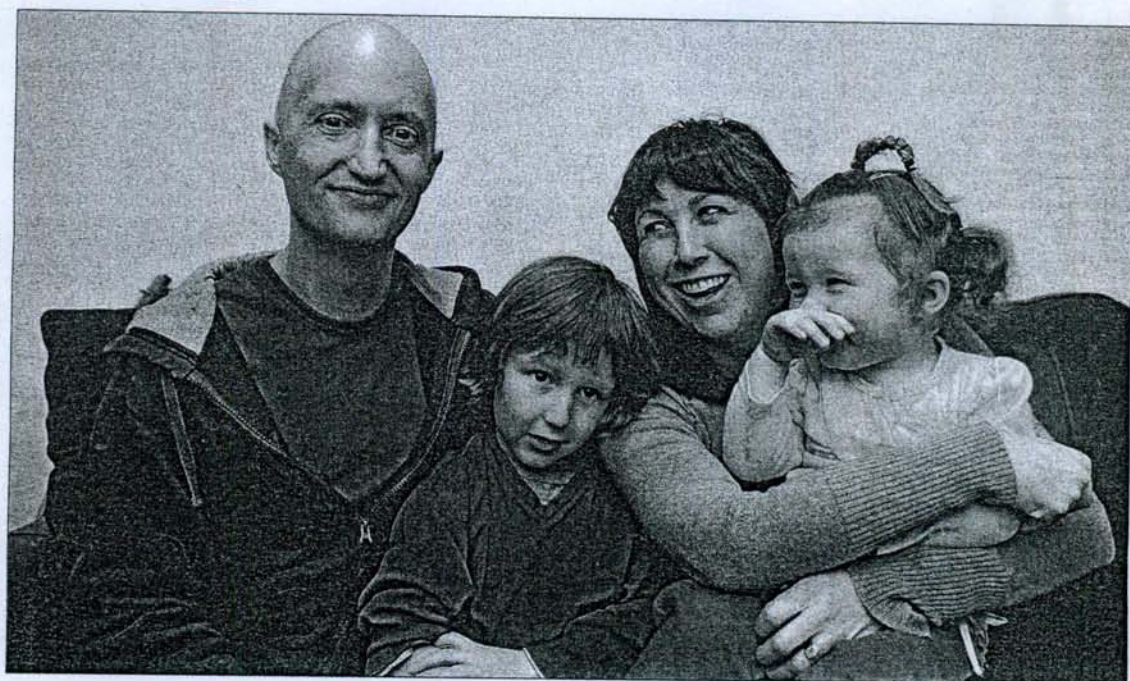
But that was where the good news ended: Mr Barnell was later told he'd contracted acute myeloid leukaemia, a very rare and dogged form of the disease that is almost certain to recur.

Despite two successful courses of chemotherapy, during which the 42-year-old lost 14kgs and became violently ill, the prognosis is not good.

"The only real chance of a cure is for him to have a peripheral stem cell transplant, otherwise known as a bone marrow transplant," said Mr Barnell's wife, Samantha MacRae.

"Unfortunately, because he is adopted, he doesn't have any siblings that can be tested and the Red Cross have been unable to find a match for him."

That was until early this month, when Mr Barnell, who has two



Graham Barnell and his wife Samantha and their children Jack, 6, and Poppy, 2.

Picture: CHRIS EASTMAN N04MS803

children, Jack, 6 and Poppy, 2, received the call he had been so desperately waiting for.

"The doctors told me they had found five potential donors in Germany. I can't tell you how relieved I was," Mr Barnell said.

"But it turned out they didn't meet the 12-point criteria needed for an unrelated donor, so it's back

to square one." Refusing to give in, Mr Barnell's wife and children created a website, www.adonorforgraham.com, in a last-ditch effort to find him a donor.

"We're watching the donor registry every day praying that we might find a match," Mrs MacRae said.

The odds, though, are slim.

According to the Australian Bone Marrow Donor Institute, just one in 1000 donors will be a match for a patient requiring a bone marrow transplant in any given year.

But Mr Barnell won't be pigeonholed as a sob-story. "I'm back cycling and I've started lifting light weights — anything to keep me feeling positive and normal."

CAN YOU HELP?

If you are aged between 18 and 50, in good health and with no history of cancer you can register as a donor by calling 9694 0101.

Last year 48 bone marrow transplants were performed in Australia.



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Race against cancer

Matt Doran

25Jul07

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High percentage of population in Beds carry gene needed for suitable transplant

County is focus in dad's global search for bone marrow donor

by Paul Fisher
paul.fisher@bedsnews.com

A FATHER-of-two who has already beaten cancer once is searching the globe for a bone marrow donor to help treat his rare form of leukaemia.

Graham Barnell, 42, now lives in Melbourne, Australia, but is looking to Bedfordshire, and his home town of Kempston where his adoptive parents still live, to help fight his cancer.

Graham was first diagnosed with acute myeloid leukaemia in April and had two cycles of chemotherapy to fight the disease into remission.

Unfortunately he has an extremely unusual type of the disease that puts him into the adverse prognosis group. These patients run a very high risk of relapse, but the family are feeling lucky as Graham was diagnosed very early on and is a good candidate for a bone marrow transplant.

Bedfordshire in particular could provide a donor for Graham as doctors are having trouble finding a match for one specific gene. But a sample of the county's population taken in 2002 showed the gene showed up in 25 per cent of people here, higher than anywhere else on the planet.

His wife Samantha, 37, said: "He



FIGHTING CANCER: Leukaemia sufferer Graham is pictured with his wife Samantha and children Poppy and Jack.

has recovered well from the two courses of chemotherapy and our spirits are quite high at the moment, but it is worrying to know that the disease could relapse at any time.

"The results of a transplant are much better if it is given in the first remission and we just don't know how long that window will be available to us."

Graham grew up in Kempston,

went to Hastingsbury Upper School, and worked at WH Allen engineering works in Queens Park

He moved to Australia with Samantha in 2003 to be closer to her family, and they have two children, Jack, aged six, and Poppy, two.

Graham was first diagnosed with leukaemia after he started having heart palpitations while on holiday in Victoria, Australia. His doctor

took a blood test and referred him to a cardiologist.

Samantha added: "If Graham hadn't been diagnosed when he was, he would have had only four-to six weeks to live. His GP rang me at work to say that he had leukaemia and I had to go and get him from work and take him straight to the hospital where a bed was ready for him to start chemotherapy.

"It was a shock to say the least. When I got to his work he was waiting outside, he got into the car and we both burst into tears."

Patients with an adverse form leukaemia have a 78 per cent chance of relapse, and only 15 per cent survive for more than five years.

Graham has no full siblings so the family are looking to the UK to find a donor as the register in Australia is small in comparison.

Being a donor is now much easier than it used to be with no actual operation needed, as the bone marrow can be collected from a simple blood donation.

If a match is found an Australian Red Cross team will fly to the UK to collect the stem cells.

The family are now urging people to sign up to the donor register and give blood to help people in similar situations. More information can be found about Graham's progress and the disease at www.adonorforgraham.com.

International quest to save husband

A HUSBAND'S rare form of leukaemia has a former Wagga high school student on an international quest to find a donor to cure him and raise awareness of the importance of registering to donate bone marrow.

Now living in Melbourne, Samantha MacRae, who grew up in Lake Cargelligo and attended Mt Erin Boarding School and Trinity Senior High School from 1982 to 1987, said she became consumed by this quest just after Easter this

year, when her husband Graham was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukaemia.

"We went away for Easter, and Graham said he was feeling unwell, so he got checked out, was diagnosed with leukaemia and began chemotherapy the very next day," Mrs MacRae said.

After two cycles of chemotherapy, she said Graham was now in remission and feeling well. However, because his type of leukaemia was highly likely to

return, Mrs MacRae said it was a race against time to find a matching bone marrow donor from the international register.

"His type of leukaemia has a poor prognosis," she said. "There is only a 10 per cent chance of chemotherapy working to cure him of the disease completely."

To compound matters for the MacRaes and their two children, for a bone marrow transplant to have the best chance of success, it needs to be administered during the first

remission, known as CR1, because the disease becomes more resistant to chemotherapy as it progresses.

After five hopeful leads for a compatible donor from Germany fell through, Mrs MacRae has upped the ante on her quest, which began as something of an email campaign among friends and now includes a website www.adonorforgraham.com, which was launched at the weekend.

"I just felt useless, so I am trying to be proactive," Mrs MacRae, a former radiographer said.



The Daily Advertiser
July 19, 2007

SAVING GRAHAM: Former Wagga student Samantha MacRae and her children Poppy, 2, and Jack, 6, are on a quest to find Graham a bone marrow donor to help cure him of a rare form of leukemia.