

Cancer Takes Eyes of 6-Year-Old Elsa; Blood Donors Needed

By GINETTE HAWKINS

(June 19, 2001) Elsa is a 6-year-old girl who now is blind as the result of retinoblastoma, a life-threatening cancer of the eyes that occurs in young children. Earlier this month, doctors at Children's Hospital removed both of Elsa's eyes.

Elsa is the daughter of Division 15 Operator Edward Carbajal. She is a patient at Children's Hospital in Los Angeles, but is recovering at home following her operation.

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A Parent's Guide

Elsa recently received a bone marrow transplant and, for some time to come, will be using a lot of blood products. She will require both red blood cells and platelets until her new bone marrow starts working.

Elsa's family is asking for your help, as there is an ongoing blood shortage in Los Angeles. Kathy Reger, who is responsible for blood donor recruitment at Children's Hospital, says there are two separate processes MTA employees can help with.

Blood Donation

The process of donating blood would require each employee to spend approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour at the hospital's Donor Center. The Center can screen each donor, by phone beforehand, to make sure they are able to donate blood. That would only take a few minutes. At the hospital, each qualified donor will have to fill out a questionnaire.

Platelets Donation

The process of platelets donation requires that a donor spend approximately two hours at the Donor Center. During this time, each donor will have to fill out a questionnaire. The donor will have one needle in each arm for an hour and 45 minutes.

Transportation

Children's Hospital can provide a van to drive interested employees to the Donor Center and then back to MTA Headquarters. The center is located at 4560 Sunset Blvd.

The center is open for blood donations, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. and on Saturdays from 8 a.m. until noon. Platelets donations are taken, Monday through Friday, from 7:30 a.m. until 3 p.m.

To donate blood or platelets for Elsa Carbajal, call the Children's Hospital Blood Donor Center at (323) 669-2441 for an appointment or for further information.

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