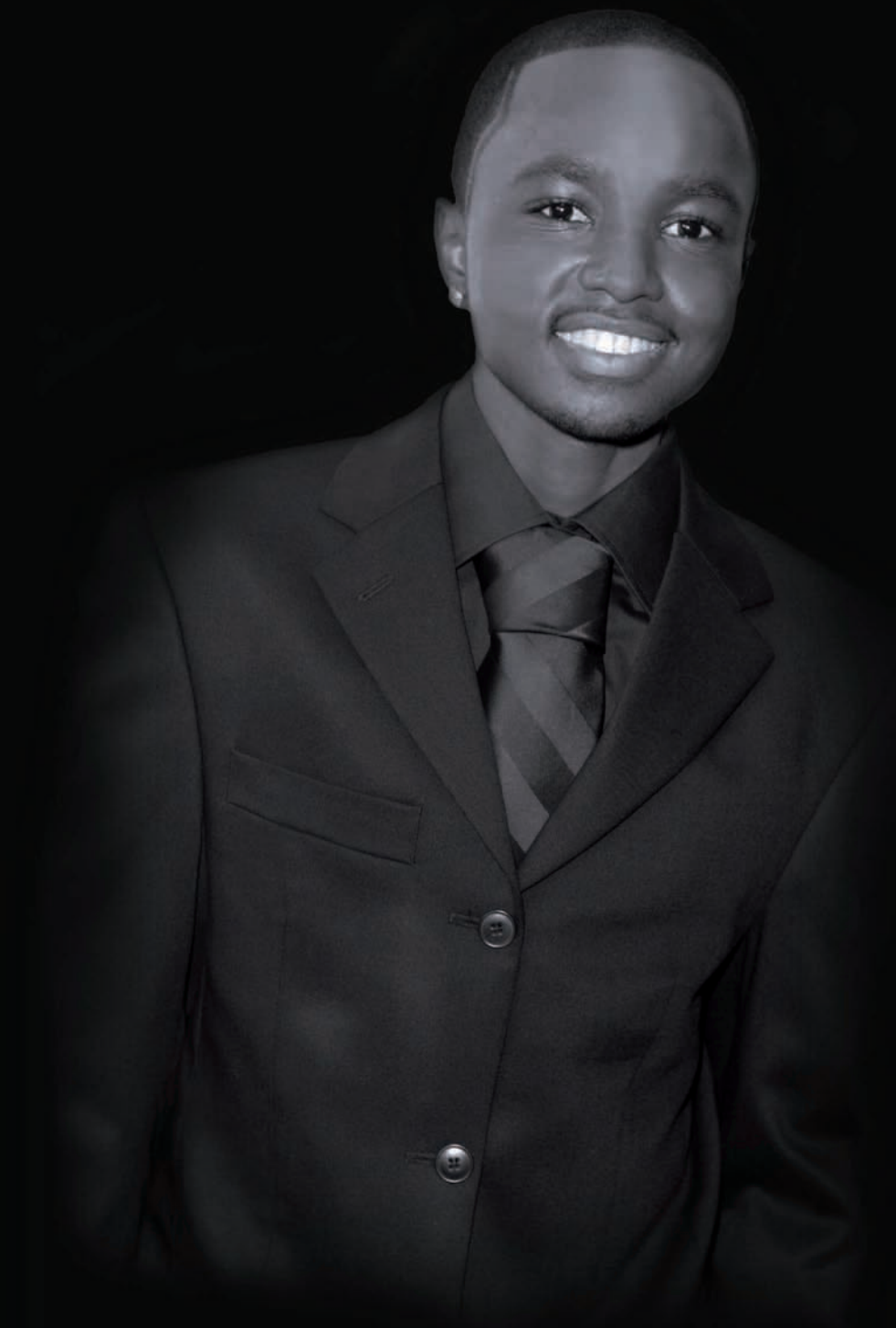




Daniel De Gale  
1987 - 2008

## Sponsors & Supporters



The **acLt** in association with  
The National Blood Service presents

# acLt GIFT OF LIFE 10

Charity Fundraising  
Dinner & Dance  
Saturday 10th October 2009  
Altitude 360

"Save the world one life at a time"



## As your hosts we warmly welcome you to celebrate the ACLT's 13th successful year as a registered charity at the 10th 'Gift of Life' Fundraising Ball.

However, in light of our son, Daniel De-Gale's untimely and tragic passing on the 8th October 2008 and weeks after his appearance and great speech at last year's Ball, we have taken the decision to mark this year's Gift of Life Ball as the very last of its kind. The event, which originally annually celebrated the anniversary of his Bone Marrow Transplant, will now be a celebration of his great and influential life as well as giving hope and inspiration to those fighting Bone Marrow cancers such as Leukaemia.

We established the ACLT, a Croydon based charity, in June 1996 because after 24 years of existence of the UK registers, only 550 Black people had ever registered - that's just 23 people coming forward per year on average! When the charity was set up, Daniel had already been suffering from Leukaemia for 3 years and we were informed that his only hope of survival was to receive a bone marrow transplant. Due to the fact that bone marrow contains racially specific characteristics, the compatible donor for Daniel could only be found within the black or mixed race population.

At the time there were around 285,000 registered potential bone marrow donors in the U.K. Unfortunately, only approx. 550 were black or mixed race. We were informed that there was only about a 1 in 250,000 chance of Daniel finding a compatible donor. This was due to the low numbers of the Black community on the register and the vast diversity of the racial group.

Bone Marrow is a blood-like liquid, which can be donated by one person to another in a simple procedure. The likelihood is that finding a matching donor is considerably greater in donors from the same ethnic background.

A person of African, Caribbean or Mixed Race descent suffering from Leukaemia or other Bone Marrow disorders has a very poor chance of finding a suitable bone marrow donor, something presently like a 1 in 100,000 chance and possibly higher, compared to a possible 1 in 5 chance for a White Northern European sufferer. This still gives a Leukaemia or Bone Marrow disorder sufferers of Black origin a very poor chance of finding a suitable match, simply because we are not registering in large enough numbers.

Our ultimate aim is to increase the number of Black and Mixed Race people on the UK bone marrow registers to approx. 60,000, by raising awareness and undertaking numerous Bone Marrow registration drives and also promoting the need for regular Blood

donors.. We have now set ourselves an additional challenge to assist in raising awareness and recruiting potential donors from all Minority Ethnic Communities in an attempt to increase the odds of finding donors for all. The numbers of potential donors from all Minority Ethnic communities is appalling low and therefore reduces the chances of finding suitable matches.

As the ACLT moves forward and continues to raise awareness and to host registration drives throughout the UK, the African, Caribbean, Mixed Race and Ethnic Minority representation on the National Blood Service and Anthony Nolan Trust bone marrow registers continues to grow, and this in turn offers hope to all sufferers around the world.

In June 1999, after six years of searching for a bone marrow match, 12 year old Daniel De-Gale finally received a bone marrow transplant at Great Ormond Street Hospital. His donor was a 45 year old lady called Doreene Carney living in Detroit, Michigan, USA who joined the register in the hope that one day she would be able to assist someone in need.

We travelled with Daniel to Detroit in April 2004 to meet the person who gave him back his life and we were all able to say 'thank you' to this wonderful person who didn't know us from Adam but wanted to do something so powerful. Doreene said at the time: "I had no idea how one simple act could impact on so many people in such an amazing way."

"When I tell my story, people ask me what happened to your bone? I just want to let everybody know that there is nothing to be afraid of. I can honestly tell you that I sowed a seed and I have reaped my harvest. We are here on this earth to help other people and we should do all that we can. I feel blessed that I could be part of Daniel's healing and part of his life."

This is why the ACLT was set up; sadly there are thousands of people awaiting a life saving Bone Marrow Transplant like Yvette Gate, Donna Benjamin, Cyril Onyejekwe, and Sandra Hinds. The real stars and celebrities in the room tonight are the various donors, patients, recipients, ex sufferers and their families. These brave but inspirational individuals are the real reason why everyone else is in attendance tonight. If you have not joined the register already and would like to know how to become a potential lifesaver please contact us on 020 8240 4480 or check our website [www.aclt.org](http://www.aclt.org) for details about our future clinic dates.



This year's event is once again in association with the National Blood Service (NBS) and its public awareness campaign such as the VIP Appeal, which encourages blood and bone marrow donation in the African, African Caribbean, Mixed Race and all minority ethnic communities.

Tonight there will be opportunities to win many Raffle prizes plus there will also be a Silent and Loud Auction to win many varied and valuable items. Therefore we hope that you have not left your debit or credit cards at home as the aim and purpose of the evening is to raise much needed donations on the Trusts behalf.

Looking back over the last 13 years once it is amazing to see what has been achieved within the ACLT. Daniel De-Gale's successful transplant, meeting his donor and the awarding of The Pride of Britain award to us (Beverley and Orin) has been the personal highlights. In addition the sight of many thousands of people registering at our drives as potential Bone Marrow donors has left us all at the ACLT feeling so emotionally high. Finally getting the news of successful donors being located and known patients getting a 2nd chance of life is the most rewarding of experiences.

The ACLT has raised the numbers of potential Black/Mixed Race donors from 550 to approx. 29,000, and many lives have been saved in the process. The ACLT has directly recruited at least 25 Black, White and Ethnic Minority donors who have donated Bone Marrow/Stem Cells to a sufferer, including Daniel De-Gale's cousin Kamisha Guthrie, Johanna Charles, Francesca Clarke, Helen Robinson, Footballer Clive Wilson and Actor David Harewood.

The long term aim of the ACLT is to raise funds (estimated £1.5M per annum) to start a small independent UK Ethnic Minority Bone Marrow Register facility to assist and sit alongside the existing World Bone Marrow Registries. That will enable us to undertake worldwide donor searches on behalf of Black, Mixed Race and Ethnic Minority patients in all around the world. Funds raised will enable us to set up the register database and pay for the testing of many potential Bone Marrow donors by external UK Laboratories. In the long term future fund the creation of our own Daniel De-Gale laboratory to enable an in-house ACLT testing and research facility.

We would like to take this opportunity to say a very special 'Thank You' to our Event Management team 'The One Event' headed by Ms Paschorina Morty and all our Sponsors, Performers and attendees.

Collectively you are all helping tonight to turn the almost impossible challenges ahead into real solutions.

Many thanks to our many volunteers, Staff, Trustees, Patrons, Family and Friends. We truly appreciate your continued support and ideas.

Many thanks to our amazing phlebotomists, who take the small blood samples. Once again without your steady hands it would be so much more difficult, you all make it look so easy and have a very calming effect on the potential donors.

Thank you all for your support through the past 13 years, we hope that you will continue to positively enhance the work of the ACLT in 2009 and beyond.

The ACLT is funded by private donations and we sincerely hope that tonight you will also be able to financially support this great Fundraising event tribute (to the late great Daniel De-Gale), and leave tonight's event with an everlasting visual and audible WOW impression.

In closing we hope you all enjoy an evening of exceptional food, friendship, entertainment & warmth.

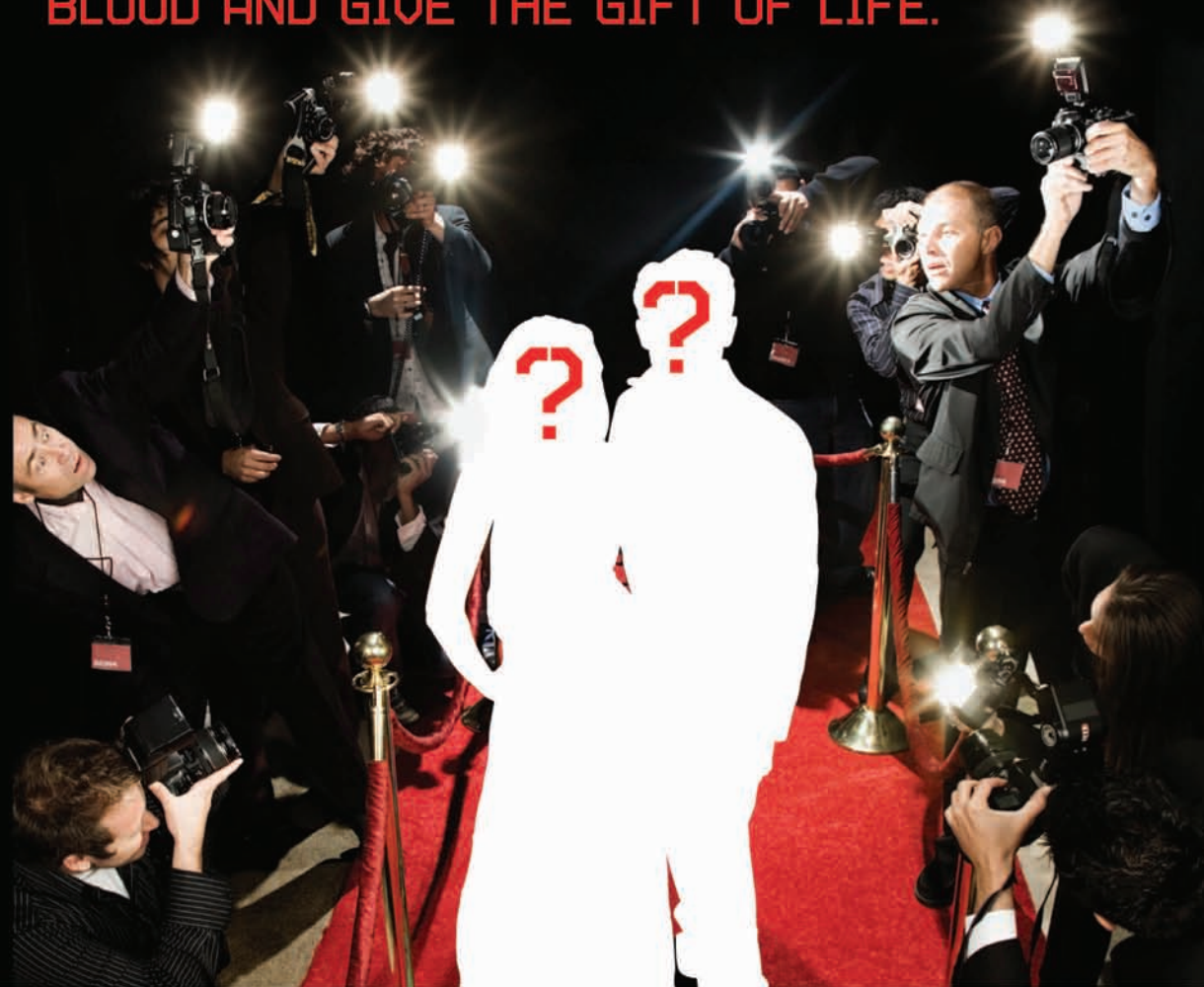
**Beverley De-Gale & Orin Lewis**  
(Parents of Daniel De-Gale and Co-Founders of the ACLT)

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Fax No. 020 8240 4481



# BLOOD BROTHERS AND SISTERS

BE A VIP IN YOUR COMMUNITY - DONATE BLOOD AND GIVE THE GIFT OF LIFE.



**VIP**  
APPEAL



Anne Welsh



Anne Welsh never believed she'd live long enough to attend her Masters graduation ceremony from prestigious Cass Business School. But the high-flying investment banker didn't let sickle cell anaemia stand in her way.

'Completing my Masters was one of my greatest achievements' says the glamorous 29-year old Londoner of African descent. 'I have a checklist of things I want to accomplish, from completing my professional banking exams, to supplementing my MSc in Investment Management with an MBA from London Business School.'

Having endured more than 20 blood transfusions, Anne is clearly one determined woman, battling a debilitating disease that affects her life in myriad ways. To avoid a crisis she mustn't swim in cold water, go out in cold weather, get too hot or dehydrated, contract a cold, drink alcohol, smoke or get stressed. 'But the pain itself is the most important symptom' she says. '[It's] deep, gnawing and throbbing... very frustrating. You never know when it will strike and it is often difficult to get it under control.'

Sickle cell anaemia is an inherited blood disorder in which red blood cells are abnormally shaped. A blood transfusion reduces the number of 'sickle cells' and usually makes Anne feel better almost immediately. But what would happen if there was no blood available for her? It's simple. Anne says: 'Without transfusions my blood could not carry the oxygen it requires to survive.'

**Certain blood groups, as well as certain conditions including sickle cell anaemia, are more common amongst Black Africans and Caribbeans, but less than 1% of UK blood donations are from the Black community.**

The VIP Appeal has been set up to encourage people from various black and minority ethnic backgrounds to give blood, and become the shining lights of their communities.

Supported by the likes of singing sensation Kelly Rowland, new Sugababe Jade Ewen, Tinchy Stryder and British fashion darling Wale Adeyemi. The appeal has signed up more than 7000 VIPs so far and they're on the look out for more. And no wonder, 28-year-old Yameen Rasul has had 465 transfusions so far; and needs around 3 units of blood every three weeks to stay alive.

Yameen



Yameen suffers from beta Thalassaemia major, a rare genetic blood disorder that means his bone marrow is unable to produce healthy red blood cells. Without transfusions, Yameen would have died a slow and painful death.

He says: 'I think the closest approximation that has been made to it is if someone has a wound that does not stop bleeding and eventually dies from the loss of blood'.

Like Anne, Yameen refuses to let his condition dictate his life, or his level of success. He attended university, graduating with a first class MEng degree in Computer Systems Engineering and now works for a top end consultancy firm. 'All of this' he says 'and all that is to come in my life would not have been possible without the blood transfusions I have had and will have.'

**As with the Black community, less than 1% of British blood donations come from people of South Asian background, who also are more likely to share blood groups and particular medical conditions.**

Anne and Yameen are just some of the people whose lives have been saved and enhanced by blood donations. But, there are thousands more who are waiting for you to become a Very important Person and give the gift of life.

Go to [www.blood.co.uk/vip](http://www.blood.co.uk/vip) for more info.



TO BECOME A BLOOD DONOR VISIT  
BLOOD.CO.UK/VIP OR CALL 0300 123 23 23



Orin Lewis  
(Proud Step-Father and written on behalf of Beverley and Dominique)



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# THE GREATEST GIFT OF ALL IS THE GIFT OF LIFE!



Support the work of the ACLT by registering as bone marrow and blood donors.

Also help to raise funds towards the setting up of an independent Black and Ethnic Minority Bone Marrow register.

Please don't deliberate  
As tomorrow maybe too late.

Call 020 8240 4480  
or visit [www.aclt.org](http://www.aclt.org)  
to register your support

Co-founders:  
Beverley De-Gale & Orin Lewis  
Pride of Britain 2006 Special Award Winners  
Charity Number: 1119516



## Master of Ceremonies/Performers

### Brenda Emmanus

Brenda Emmanus is the BBC London's Arts, Culture and Entertainment Correspondent following a successful, diverse and longstanding career in print journalism, television and radio broadcasting.

Brenda made her mark as a TV presenter for the BBC 1's 'The Clothes Show', plus Channel Four News, Sky and Granada Television including 'This Morning'. Brenda has graced the airwaves with her BBC Radio 2's The Early Show and BBC World Service youth show Megamix, and guest slots on Radio Five Live, Radio 4's Woman's Hour and Choice FM.

As a freelance writer, her articles have featured in Pride, Caribbean Eye magazines, New Nation, Cosmopolitan and The Observer. Her major publishing roles include Editor in Chief of 'Celebrating Sista's' magazine for International Women's Month, and judging ethnic minority authors for Penguin Books. Brenda was an Ethnic Minority Media Award (EMMA) finalist, and has awards from The Voice Newspaper and European Federation of Black Women Business Owners.

Brenda is a charity devotee, including patron of Body and Soul (HIV and AIDS), Second Wave Theatre Group, and supports The Black Londoner's Forum amongst others. Brenda mentors young people on media careers through The National Black Women's Network and is a Visiting Professor at the University of the Art.

Brenda has pledged her support to The African Caribbean Leukaemia Trust over many years, for which we are truly grateful. Once again, we are honoured to welcome Brenda as the host of this year's Gift of Life Ball, and how appropriate since she also hosted the very first Gift of Life Ball in June 2000.



### Beverley Knight

Multi award winning Ms Beverley Knight MBE is the reigning Queen of British Soul. Beverley's powerful vocals have wowed audiences since her music career began in 1995.

Beverley's chart topping singles 'Greatest Day' and 'Shoulda Woulda Coulda' from her third album 'Who I Am' secured her as a household name in 2002.

Beverley's diverse song writing and energy contribute to her enduring success with 14 Top 40 hits over 15 years. She has performed for Nelson Mandela and Quincy Jones and collaborates with world class artists including Stevie Wonder, Prince, Take That, legendary US RnB producers Jam & Lewis (Janet Jackson, Mariah Carey, Usher), and songwriters such as Amanda Ghost (Beyoncé, Shakira).

Beverley has amassed over one million album sales. Her four gold albums and 2006 platinum album have attracted 20 award nominations. Beverley has won three MOBOs, two Black Music Awards and EMMA for Best Act, Album and Producer, and an Urban Music Award for Lifetime Achievement.

Beverley was bestowed with a Doctor of Music degree in 2005 and an MBE in 2007 for services to music and inspirational philanthropic work for charities including Christian Aid, The Terrence Higgins Trust and Women's Aid. Beverley also presents BBC2's radio show 'Beverley's Gospel Nights'.

In 2008, Beverley established her own record label - Hurricane Records, to release her sixth album '100%' in 2009, featuring a duet with Chaka Khan.



### Thomas Spencer-Wortley

Thomas Spencer-Wortley is a classical crossover tenor, recently described by The Sunday Express as '...the solo version of Il Divo'.

He is currently making his mark in the music world through his debut album 'Credere', recently released in August 2009.

Thomas has performed with artists such as Katherine Jenkins and All Angels. He is currently the official tenor of Derby County Football Club, and regularly sings before a capacity crowd of 33,000 people at Pride Park Stadium. In addition to his musical performances, Thomas has set up his own production company and record label, Cove Records. He studied classical voice at Trinity College Of Music and is a graduate of the Royal Academy of Music.

Thomas collaborates with his younger brother, composer & arranger, Oliver Spencer-Wortley to create a clearly recognisable sound that captures the excitement of the modern era, whilst retaining the beauty and artistry of the original classical composition. Many people who have listened to their version of 'Ave Maria' agree this is a successful marriage of the two musical worlds.

Later this year Thomas will be performing a series of spectacular Christmas concerts in London, Birmingham and Harrogate., Bookings/events information: [www.thomasspencerwortley.com](http://www.thomasspencerwortley.com).



### YolanDa Brown

MOBO Award winning YolanDa Brown is a contemporary urban Jazz saxophonist and composer. YolanDa's effortlessly beautiful sound captivates audiences with melodic jazz fused with soul, RnB, and gospel with an infectious twist of reggae and latin.

Born to Jamaican parents in London, this miraculously gifted saxophonist developed her natural flare for music at the tender age of 6. Largely self taught, she honed her skills on the piano, violin, drums, recorder and oboe before realising her passion for the saxophone at 13.

By her early 20s, YolanDa won the attention of many artists with invitations to play at live tours. Over the years, YolanDa has performed alongside musical greats such as Alexander O'Neal, The Temptations, Mica Paris, Omar, Soweto Kinch, Sway and Errol Brown.

YolanDa established her solo career in 2006, then took centre stage at her sell-out debut concert at the London Mermaid Theatre by 2007. She has headlined at prestigious venues across Europe, the Caribbean and US, including the High Commission and Ocho Rios Festival in Jamaica.

YolanDa's meteoric success has certainly blazed a trail in the Jazz scene. The 2008 MOBO award for Best Jazz Artist and UMA 2008 nominee, and has just won the Best Jazz Artist for the 2009 MOBO awards. YolanDa's talent knows no boundaries as she enjoys TV show presenting and pursuing an academic career in Management Science and Social Research, finishing her PhD at the University of Kent... whilst finalising her debut album and securing a much sort after recording contract!



### Adaggio

The reputation of Adaggio is spreading rapidly, in terms of creating a strong image of a street violinist, with an ear and ability to bring classic RnB tunes to life as well as performing his own tracks.

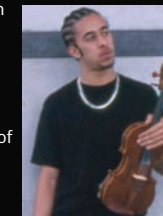
Daniel, aged 26, performs under the name of 'Adaggio'. His East London roots helped establish a strong link with many hip-hop and grime acts hailing from the area.

Adaggio is best described as a promising soloist, composer and producer with a reputation for his creativity within the industry. His style is unorthodox, exuberant and engaging to watch and listen. Drawing on genres such as soul, reggae, rock and funk, his heart sits firmly within the urban, Hip Hop and RnB to create a sound that transforms the typically classical tones into flowing heavy bass sounds that capture the vibe of the 'street'.

This apparent newcomer has in fact played music since the age of 7. He possesses a genuine talent, ambition, intelligence and strength that has already had a profound impact.

Adaggio has strong links with the Reggae Philharmonic Orchestra and is committed to ensuring that 'real' music is accessible and relevant to the street scene.

No doubt his growing fan base will be captivated by Adaggio's rich interpretations, influenced by classic composers such as Dvorak and Bartok and contemporary artists such as Mobb Deep for many years to come.



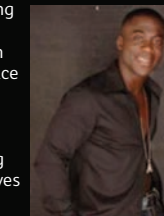
### DJ Abrantee

Award winning DJ Abrantee hosts his own show on Choice FM 96.9fm Monday - Fridays, 3 - 6am, livening up the airwaves with his high energy and quick witted cheeky charm.

DJ Abrantee received Best Entertainer Of the Year at the Prestigious 2006 GMA awards and has entertained music lovers all over the world, and has played for many of Hip Hop and RnBs greatest names including Missy Elliot, Ja Rule, Ray Jay, Fundamental, Busta Rhymes, Fabulous, Joe, Foxy Brown, Baby Cham, Jagged Edge. He has recently showcased his set in Ghana, DJing for the 'Jigga Man' himself at Jay-Z's after party. In essence, it's the love of entertaining that keeps him going.

DJ Abrantee has also hosted many prestigious award ceremonies, fronted advertising campaigns and has had a number of TV appearances on soaps including The Bill and Footballers Wives, where he thrives on the opportunity to indulge his passion for acting.

Abrantee loves to devote his time to leading and supporting positive community campaigns particularly with his fellow Ghanaians. He is also recognised for promoting education through entertainment with his workshops for budding young entertainers.





## ACLT Patrons

I am thrilled that you have joined us tonight to help raise funds for the African Caribbean Leukaemia Trust (ACLT).

I first met Daniel, Beverley and Orin as they embarked on their mission to find a donor. In June 1999, Daniel became the first black person in the UK to receive bone marrow from an unrelated donor. Daniel celebrated nine years post transplant in June 2008, but sadly passed away in October 2008.

Every year, over 24,000 people in the UK are diagnosed with Leukaemia or a related cancer. In the UK, a white person has at best a one in five chance of finding a bone marrow match, whereas a black or ethnic minority has odds in the region of one in 100,000 of finding a match.

Funds raised at Gift of Life this year will be used to continue to raise awareness of the charity and help them in their mission to save the lives of many black, mixed race and ethnic minority patients. Today, the co-founders (Beverley De-Gale and Orin Lewis) continue to drive the ACLT forward and recently passed the milestone of recruiting 29,000 donors, which has significantly contributed to saving the lives of 25 people. If funds are raised quickly then the numbers of donors and lives saved could rise substantially.

Just £10,000 will pay for 200 blood samples to be tested which could determine whether a matching donor can be found for the 7,000 black and mixed raced people worldwide requiring a



*Sarah*

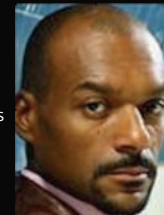
Sarah, Duchess of York

bone marrow transplant. For those patients who do not respond to chemotherapy or radiotherapy, a bone marrow transplant is their only hope of life. Shockingly, only 30% of these people will find a match within their own family.

The Gift of Life Ball was intended as a way of celebrating Daniel's bone marrow transplant which came despite the odds, but in light of his recent passing the ACLT have made the decision to make this year's event the very last it will host. I hope you have a really enjoyable evening and that you will join me in offering your support to make sure that this year's event is the biggest, most awe inspiring and crucially, the most successful in its history.

### Colin Salmon - Actor

Colin Salmon is a Patron of the ACLT, registered as a potential donor and is one of England's best actors. With a bold voice and posture, Colin makes his characters a favourite among audiences for every role he plays. He made his feature debut as Sgt. Robert Oswald in the British mega-hit mini-series "Prime Suspect 2" (1992) which gave him much acclaim among British audiences. He has a recurring role in the James Bond films as Charles Robinson, M's Chief of Staff. He has also appeared as the Commander, James "One" Shade in the videogame-to-movie Resident Evil (2002) and played Oonu, squad leader of the Skybox in the mini-series "Dinotopia" (2002). His other film credits include Captives (1994), Wisdom of Crocodiles, The (1998), Fanny and Elvis (1999), Mind Games (2000), and My Kingdom (2001). His theatre credits include 'Ariadne' at London's Queen Elizabeth Hall.



### David D. Hays aka "The Hayemaker"

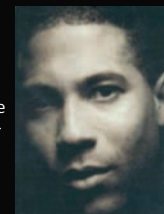
My name is David 'The Hayemaker' Hays and I am the current undisputed WBC, WBA, WBO and 'The Ring' Magazine cruiserweight champion of the world. My record is 22-1 (20 KO's), and I have been a professional boxer since December 2002.



I had the pleasure of meeting Orin Lewis, co-founder of the ACLT in 2007. A meeting was arranged by a very good friend who is a supporter of the work of the charity. Orin explained to me at the meeting about the work of raising awareness, recruiting potential bone marrow donors and blood donors and to ultimately set up an independent ACLT bone marrow registry. I was able to experience the work of the charity 1st hand whilst attending a registration drive in West London on Saturday 8th December the day of the Ricky Hutton v Floyd Mayweather fight. I stopped off on my way to the Sky Studios in West London to observe and to get registered myself. I was so impressed with the friendliness of the ACLT volunteers and the approach taken by them to all members of the public wanting to register and the overall way in which the work was being done. I met some families that were directly affected by the leukaemia and bone marrow transplants. I felt truly humbled and it really wasn't a difficult decision to make in getting involved in the ACLT's very worthy cause. It is a pleasure for me to say that I am a Patron of the ACLT and I will support the cause in any way possible.

### John Barnes MBE

'I have been a Patron for the ACLT since 1999, when I was introduced to the De-Gale/Lewis family by my friend Ian Wright who was already a Patron for the ACLT. At the time I was not aware of the problems faced by people

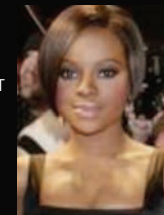


diagnosed as needing bone marrow transplants in finding life saving matches or that matching is race specific. I immediately joined the register at an ACLT registration clinic and remain proud to be associated with the work that's being done by continually raising awareness and the recruitment of new potential bone marrow donors'.

As a valued Patron of the ACLT, John has continuously helped to raise much needed funds on behalf of the charity.

### Keisha Buchanan – UK Singer

I first heard about the work of the ACLT through a campaign in 2006 on behalf of 7 year old Keiton Knight, who was diagnosed with leukaemia and urgently needed a bone marrow transplant to survive.



The ACLT held numerous awareness events and registration drives in the hope of finding Keiton a life saving matching donor. Sadly, Keiton passed away at the beginning of 2007 because a good enough match was not found in time, however the charity was able to recruit hundreds of new potential donors through their tireless campaign. Our hope is that through Keiton and others before and after him matches will be found for other patients around the world.

I felt very inspired by the charities compassion and strong commitment to help anyone that finds themselves in this dire situation and so I am honoured to be a part of the ACLT's work and will do my bit to ensure they are able to continue achieving the potential of offering the Gift of Life.

### Micah Richard – Premiership (Manchester City) & International England Footballer

I was made aware of the ACLT charity and the great work they are doing through my representative /Business Manager Chris Nathaniel. What inspired me the most was the fact that the co-founders are the parents of a small child who needed the help of a community to survive from a diagnosis of leukaemia.



They set up a charity in order to raise awareness within a community that had never considered donating bone marrow or blood. They then went on to recruit all interested parties onto a register of potential bone marrow donors and also encourage blood donation. Not only did they assist in finding a suitable donor for their son but then stepped up the campaign to help other patients and their families in the same predicament their son was in. The ACLT has been going for 12 years and assists families who are looking for matches all around the world. I am proud to be associated with the work and will do anything within my power to ensure the work goes from strength to strength.

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## Imogin Appiah



My daughter Imogin Appiah is a wonderful intelligent little girl. She can be a handful at times but she is my world. One can only imagine my shock when I received the terrifying news that my baby was not well during my lunch break at work.

That day Imogin was with her grandmother September 18 2006, a double shock for two people in the space of only a few minutes. Entering Croydon's Mayday hospital, I began to tremble uncontrollably but I soldiered on only to have my worst fears confirmed. My beautiful daughter had Acute Lymphoblastic Leukaemia (ALL). I asked if it was bad news. Yes it is Sheila; however it is treatable, yes most certainly. Those words became my strength and my hope.

From this day Imogin started a two and a half year course of chemotherapy and I was her full time carer. In October 2008 Imogin finished her treatment we celebrated with a trip to Disneyland Paris with the magical taxi tours. Amazingly, 250 children, the London Ambulance Service, the Fire Brigade, the British Police, and the French Police all helped to make it an unforgettable weekend.

But unfortunately in Tuesday 17th February 2009 Imogin had relapsed and needed a bone marrow transplant to survive.

The love that I have for my daughter is incredibly deep, she means the world to me I honour her and look upon her with the greatest of respect. She is and always will be a fighter. My day to day bedside routine was based on her survival, she is strong, we are strong and we reached out for support and received support from fantastic people. As Imogin's condition worsened, the ACLT organised a host of bone marrow registration clinics in a bid to find a match for the Imogin.

But we continued with our hope, strength and continued determination to find her a match. However recently a male cord blood stem cell donor was found to be a perfect match and Imogin underwent a life-saving transplant procedure. Imogin went into hospital on July 17 to start preparation for the bone marrow transplant. She had to go through four days of total body radiotherapy twice a day to kill off her diseased bone marrow. On July 19, she went into isolation and received the donated stem cells at 11.30am at the Royal Marsden Hospital. She was in isolation until Sunday 2nd August and is recovering extremely well.

Imogin recently celebrated her 7th birthday and she is running around and is getting her appetite back. I am so thrilled and owe the community a huge debt of thanks for turning out in their hundreds to support my Imogin over a series of bone marrow registration clinics.

I want to say a heartfelt 'thank you' to everyone who registered, please, remain on the register of potential donors, you may be able to save someone's life. Thank you to the Royal Marsden and St George's Hospital for looking after Imogin and ensuring her treatment has to date been a success. Thank You to the News Media for highlighting Imogin's plight and helping to encourage the Black and Mixed Race community to register as donors. To everyone, especially my family and friends for their love and support during this ordeal.

*Words Written by Sheila Appiah, Imogin's Mum*

## Helen Robinson



It all started 11 years ago, watching TV, Daniel De-Gale and his parents were on GMTV campaigning for ethnic minorities to come forward to donate blood to see if they were a possible bone marrow match for their son who desperately needed a bone marrow transplant.

I went along to the blood donation, mobile unit which had been set up in the car park at Tesco's in Brixton, South London. After my blood donation I went home and forgot all about it.

A few years later I was contacted by The Anthony Nolan Bone Marrow Trust who informed me that from that blood donation, I had been identified as a potential match for someone. I was requested to visit my doctor to have further samples of blood taken, which would enable the Trust to confirm my suitability. On this occasion I wasn't.

Over the next few years, I was contacted on a further 2 occasions, again being asked to give blood as I was potentially a match and again I wasn't.

However on 3rd May 2002 I received a phone call informing me that I was a definite match for an individual in America, and would I be prepared to

donate marrow, or rather in my case stem cells. As I was donating cells the process involved me getting a series of injections over a course of days. Once the right amount of cells had been 'made' they would be 'harvested' during a procedure similar to dialysis.

An appointment was then made for a nurse to come to my house to administer the injections. I received an injection every day for the next 4 days, and on the 5th day I went into hospital to have the cells harvested.

I must say, the injections themselves were ok, but when the cells were growing it was mildly painful, partly relieved by pain killers. The harvesting was painless, just a slight scratch when the needles were going in. Although it does take a long time, I was in the hospital for most of the day.

I received fantastic aftercare, my Donor Co-ordinator was in constant touch asking how I was and for the next 5 years I had regular blood tests, just to ensure that everything was as it should be and that no adverse affects had been caused.

It's been quite a while since I thought about my donation that is until I turned up at a Comedy show at the Hackney Empire, East London on the 23rd May 2009. Orin Lewis and a team of 'volunteers' were there promoting ACLT and the good work they do. I wanted to introduce myself to let him know that it was his son Daniel De-Gale that had inspired me all those years ago to become a donor.

Daniel started this for me all those years ago and now Orin has asked me to write my story, so in a funny way I've come full circle.

*Helen Robinson  
July 2009*



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## WE ARE ONE....



The photograph suggests they are the closest of friends and could even be sisters...

But, while blood unites them, they are not related. In fact, it is the first time that Sarah Thompson and Michelle Duncan have met. Last month, they celebrated their incredible bond, brought together by a new medical process and a large dose of sheer good luck.

Three years ago, Sarah, 35, a secondary school teacher from Brockley, South-East London, was suffering from leukaemia for a second time. The only possible cure was a bone marrow transplant. Michelle, who had agreed to join the bone marrow registry after a chance request when she went to give blood, became her donor.

Following the lifesaving transplant, Sarah wrote a letter of thanks and in June this year, Michelle, 24, a human resources officer from Clapham, South London, felt ready to reply. Today, they are still celebrating after a party that gave Sarah the opportunity to introduce to her family and friends the stranger who saved her life.

Their remarkable story begins in spring 2006, during a visit to the local blood bank. 'I was a regular donor,' says Michelle. 'On my fourth visit, I was asked if I would consider joining the bone marrow registry. I needed only to give an extra sample of blood for my DNA to be registered, so I agreed, then forgot all about it.'

### A Matching donor, so soon after registering

However, a month after she registered, Michelle received a call from the National Blood Service to say she was a match for a leukaemia sufferer. With patient confidentiality of paramount concern, Michelle was given no other details of the person whose life she might be needed to save. 'But it would not have made any difference if they had,' says Michelle. 'I knew I could save a person's life.'

That anonymous leukaemia sufferer was Sarah, who was first diagnosed in May 2004 after she collapsed while looking for bridesmaids' dresses for her wedding that summer. With the ceremony on hold, during the next six months she was given four courses of chemotherapy. By Christmas the cancer was in remission and three months later she married Mark, 36, a teacher.

Sarah returned to work, but in December 2005, her consultant called to say her monthly blood tests showed the cancer had returned. While it could be held at bay with more chemotherapy, Sarah's survival depended on finding a bone marrow donor. Her siblings and husband were tested but did not produce a match.

But because of Sarah's racial heritage - her mother Jenny, 56, a teaching assistant, is English, while her father Gilbert, 55, a retail manager, is Jamaican - the odds of finding a suitable match were slim.

So, the day Sarah was told there was no one on the bone marrow registry here or abroad who could save her was, she says, 'the bleakest day of my life, a complete absence of hope'. In between another two bouts of more aggressive chemotherapy, Sarah and her family decided to try to locate a match themselves.

### ACLT assists Sarah in her search

The ACLT set up registration clinics across the capital in an attempt to find Sarah a donor. 'Tissue types rarely match across different ethnic groups,' says Beverley De-Gale, founder of ACLT. 'You have the best chance of finding a match from someone within your own family and, failing that, someone who shares the same ancestry, which is particularly diverse among black and mixed-race groups.' At least 1,000 people joined the registry as a result, and three were found to be matches --for other sufferers.

Sarah remained in limbo, until that spring day when Michelle had agreed to give an extra sample of blood. Her compatibility was not perfect, not least because of the difference in racial backgrounds.

Her father Andrew, 49, a chef, is Scottish, and her mother, Marie, 46, is Mauritian. But still there were enough genes in common for doctors to recommend going ahead.

Sarah was prepared for the transplant with eight days of radiotherapy to eradicate any remaining cancerous cells and was given a 'conditioning treatment' in the form of drugs that removed some of her own bone marrow to make way for the transplant.



### Donor preparation

Meanwhile, Michelle was being visited at home by a nurse who injected her over five days with a hormone that would stimulate the release into the bloodstream of stem cells from her bone marrow.

Stem cells are capable of reproducing themselves and also produce 'daughter' cells that mature into cells with particular functions - such as those of the immune system - and therefore form the very lifeblood of a bone marrow transplant.

Finally, Michelle went into hospital for peripheral stem-cell treatment --when blood is taken from one arm, its stem cells removed, and then returned via the other arm - and was home within hours.

'It wasn't that different from giving blood,' she says. 'I was back to normal straight away, although I felt a little tired. But even if the treatment had been more invasive, I'd have still gone ahead. I was shocked when I had the call to say I was a match, especially so soon after registering, but when you know that whoever's going to be receiving your bone marrow has already been through so much worse, it puts your own discomfort into perspective.'

### Sarah's Transplant

Michelle's bone marrow was transplanted into Sarah using a similar procedure as the method of removal. 'It took 40 minutes,' says Sarah. 'My mum, dad and sister were with me and they cried the whole time. I was so excited, I sat there texting all my friends,' she says.

'The stem cells soon find their way to the bone marrow and start dividing again and making new cells,' says Dr Travers. It's why Sarah left hospital, just a week later, with a new blood group, because Michelle's stem cells are now producing her blood.

### Thank you to her unknown donor

It was then that Sarah wrote to thank her donor. Although there are no legal guidelines, NHS Blood & Transplant, which runs the blood transfusion and organ donor services, does not encourage donors and recipients or their families to meet and, for two years after transplantation, will not even pass on contact details.

When the organisation did pass on Sarah's note, Michelle says that she 'smiled all day. I was just so happy to have helped'. But, she felt, 'no words I could have expressed would have been appropriate'. And she was mindful of the fact that Sarah had made it clear she was still recovering. 'I didn't want to interfere, not knowing how ill she may still have been,' says Michelle.

Sarah says: 'Knowing there was a stranger out there who was responsible for my life was so difficult to comprehend,' Sarah says. 'I had such immense gratitude towards this person and I wanted desperately to say something, do something, to pay that person back.'

So she then devoted herself to increasing awareness of the need for more black and mixed-race donors through the ACLT, which has already increased numbers from 550 when it first started in 1996, to a still insufficient 29,000 out of an estimated 550,000 donors registered across all racial groups. 'Without a person on whom to focus, I did the charity work looking for random people to thank,' says Sarah.

### 2nd Anniversary and a poem

On the second anniversary of her transplant, in November 2008, Sarah wrote to her donor once more, and she also enclosed a poem from Mark which thanked the person for his wife's survival.

'That brought it home to me what I'd done,' says Michelle. 'When you give blood, you don't have a clue where it goes. But here was a real person for whom I'd made a difference. And I then realised that I hadn't just helped her, I'd affected the lives of all the people around her, too.' So Michelle asked the National Blood Service to pass on her details. The pair exchanged emails before meeting for the first time on July 23rd 2009.

'Before we met, I was so nervous. Would I be worthy of Michelle?' says Sarah. She need not have worried. 'It was like meeting an old friend: we ate, drank and talked non-stop for three hours,' says Michelle.

Sarah agrees: 'Even if she hadn't saved my life, I would choose her as a friend.'

'Sarah will always be in my life,' says Michelle. 'We now have an unbreakable bond.'

'Having someone tangible to thank, the person whose blood runs through my veins, has made such a huge difference to me,' says Sarah. 'Michelle was the perfect stranger and I am blessed to have finally met my match.'

*Words re-produced courtesy of Joani Walsh and The Mail on Sunday*

## Gift of Life History







## ACLT Thanks

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To all of the other outstanding individuals such as sufferers, family members, potential bone marrow donors, financial donors, and organisations that we have not mentioned due to lack of space, a big "Thank You" from the ACLT



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