



The Sunflower Fund

Hope begins with you

## MEDIA RELEASE

*For immediate release*

### THE SUNFLOWER FUND URGES SOUTH AFRICANS TO HELP SAVE LIVES

[July 2019] Every year, millions of individuals around the world are diagnosed with cancer. In 2018, just under 1.5 million new cases of blood cancer were recorded worldwide and according to a special report by Discovery Health released in 2018, cancer causes more deaths in South Africa than HIV/ Aids, TB and malaria combined. Even more staggering is the fact detailed in the same report that Leukaemia tops the list of top five cancers by cost at R281 455 per case on average. Whilst it is good to shine the spotlight on these statistics to raise awareness, The Sunflower Fund want to use Bone Marrow Stem Cell donation and Leukaemia awareness month to remind South Africans that they actually can do something to change these statistics.

The Sunflower Fund initiated its annual Sunflower Day campaign 16 years ago to get individuals involved in the fight against blood diseases. The campaign, which is anchored by the sale of the Tube of Hope (TOPE), a multi-purpose accessory, is aimed at raising funds for the recruitment of blood stem cell donors to give the hope of cure to patients diagnosed with life-threatening blood diseases like leukaemia who are in need of a life-saving stem cell transplant.

A patient in need of a transplant needs a genetic matching donor. There is only a 25% chance that a sibling will be a match. The remaining 75% chance depends on finding an unrelated matching donor. The best chance of finding this match is someone from the same ethnic background as the patient. As such, South Africa needs an ethnically diverse registry of committed donors.

The Sunflower Fund pays for the cost of the DNA test to register a donor, which costs R3100 per donor. All funds raised through the Sunflower Day campaign goes towards these costs.

Sunflower Day will be commemorated on Friday 20 September 2019. TOPES will be on sale from 1 August retailing for R30 at Pick n Pay stores nationwide, selected independent pharmacies and online at Zando (while stocks last).

The design is inspired by the coming together of various African cultures, bringing hope of finding their life-saving match to patients in need of a stem cell transplant. The TOPE comes in 6 vibrant colours each symbolising hope and depicting 'HopeTags'.

"Hope tags are a series of hash tags that will be used throughout the campaign as labels that unite and empower us rather than the divisive labels that society has become accustomed to," says Kim Webster Head of Communications at The Sunflower Fund.

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0800 12 10 82

[www.sunflowerfund.org](http://www.sunflowerfund.org)





The Sunflower Fund

Hope begins with you

Get your favourite hope tag colour and make a statement in support of individuals with blood diseases.

What's your #HopeTag?

Blue – Confident

Pink – Courageous

Yellow – Optimistic

Purple – Selfless

Green – Strong

Orange – Brave

“In addition to buying a TOPE, we encourage individuals between 18 – 45 years, with a consistent weight of more than 50kgs and a BMI of less than 40 to contact us and register as donors,” Webster added.

To partner with The Sunflower Fund as a host for a Sunflower Day celebration event, to make a donation or to set up an awareness talk and donor drive at your organisation, contact Traci Sassenberg on 021 701 0661 or [traci@sunflowerfund.org](mailto:traci@sunflowerfund.org).

For more information about The Sunflower Fund or to become a donor visit [www.sunflowerfund.org](http://www.sunflowerfund.org), contact 0800 12 10 82 or send a WhatsApp message to 074 715 0212.

ENDS...

### **About The Sunflower Fund**

The Sunflower Fund is a donor recruitment centre and stem cell registry that is part of a global network, dedicated to creating awareness about blood diseases and stem cell donation, recruiting blood stem cell donors and maintaining a registry of committed donors.

The Sunflower Fund pays for the cost of the tissue-type testing. This is fundamental to saving the lives of South Africans who need a stem cell transplant.

The chance of finding a matching donor is 1 in 100,000 – and as ethnic origin plays a significant role in the search for a donor, South Africa's rainbow nation is at a distinct disadvantage, requiring a large pool of prospective donors.

Should you wish to become a donor, support one of the fundraising projects or make a financial contribution, please contact The Sunflower Fund on 0800 12 10 82 or via WhatsApp 074 715 0212. You can also visit [www.sunflowerfund.org](http://www.sunflowerfund.org) to learn more or look out for the DONATE button to make a cash donation via the website.

**Released on behalf of The Sunflower Fund by:**



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