

# Filmmaker seeks bone marrow donor after leukemia relapse

By TOMO HIRAI  
Nichii Bei Weekly

In 2016, Paul Goodman was diagnosed with leukemia. The 25-year-old *Yonsei* filmmaker had gone to the doctor to take some blood tests and was quickly ushered to the ER the next day to start chemotherapy. A year later, he was in remission. He had even made it to the four-year mark, meaning the chance of a relapse was low, but last Thanksgiving he noticed some lumps in the back of his neck.

"Physically, I felt fine. The lumps were painless, but I called my doctor," he told the *Nichii Bei Weekly* via telephone from a hospital in Newport Beach, Calif.

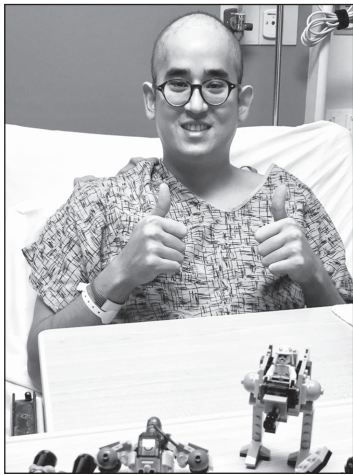
Following a biopsy, he learned that he had acute lymphoblastic leukemia, and his cancer had relapsed.

Unlike his first diagnosis in 2016, this time, the cancer was affecting his central nervous system. Goodman, who is now 29 years old, has been undergoing a second round of intensive chemotherapy sessions since learning of his relapse. His latest hospital stay lasted 11 days before he could go home.

"At this point, (I need) a bone marrow transplant. Yeah, it's proven that my bone marrow will not go on in this life supporting me, no matter how much chemotherapy we throw at it. It will eventually start cloning and creating cancer cells again," he said.

Goodman is seeking a matching donor, who will most likely be of Japanese and white descent. His sister is the closest match; however, she is only a 50 percent match.

"They could still do it if he doesn't find a donor, but it's going to be really tough on his body," Carol Gillespie, executive director of Asian American Donor Program, told the *Nichii Bei*



Paul Goodman  
photo courtesy of Greg Goodman

*Weekly*.

Gillespie noted the difficulty in finding a mixed-race donor of Japanese and white ancestry. She said the 10 antigens Goodman needs are a mix of antigens found only among Japanese and white donors.

While Goodman, who is from Orange County and attended the University of California, Santa Barbara, is currently undergoing treatment, he is also working on his second feature film. He wrote the script for his first feature film, "Evergreen," starring Scott Keiji Takeda and Hannah Leigh, from the hospital in 2016.

"Thinking back, right now, I'm like, 'Oh my gosh, how could you have written that thing while you're doing this.' It was terrible, but I think I really used it as an escape from the reality that I was facing," Goodman said.

The film follows a man and a woman driving up the coast from Los Angeles to Canada and embodied Goodman's own urge to make the drive. He said after finishing the intensive chemotherapy, he drove up and down the coast three or four times to scout locations and film the movie in between lighter chemotherapy

appointments.

"The day we finished shooting, I got back to Orange County and did what I thought was my last chemotherapy treatment ever. So we had the finished product in hand. No more chemo. All I had to do was edit it," he said. "And then I just edited the movie throughout the pandemic and finished it. I finished it."

Throughout his diagnosis, Goodman said he has felt lucky for all the support he has received.

"I think we all say in our heads, 'If anything happened, I'd be there for you.' But it never happens. ... So it's strange this occurs in this odd parallel universe where I'm suddenly the center of attention for all of these people who I've ... never even talked to at all. All of a sudden they're there by my side doing donation drives, getting my parents' food, wishing me well. It's extremely inspiring," he said. "You know I feel sick, but I also feel just love."

Goodman's mother, Bonnie Goodman, acknowledged the extent to which their surrounding community has come to their aid.

Goodman said Asians for Miracle Marrow Matches, or A3M, has "been working together with our other family friends, and friends of Paul, and their parents and it's just grown. And so next thing I knew, they had these live drives set up in Orange County and L.A., San Fernando and San Gabriel and now, Hawai'i and Northern California and Seattle."

The Goodmans have done their best to support their son while the community surrounding them continues to raise awareness about Goodman's search for a donor. Bonnie Goodman said news of her son's relapse was like a "gut punch."

Family members haven't been allowed to visit, she said. Instead,

they have been able to deliver meals for Goodman to the hospital's reception desk. While Goodman was released Jan. 23, his mother said the 11 days he spent in the hospital were difficult due to the isolation and the terrible migraines he now suffers due to the chemotherapy.

"When I picked him up, he asked me right away, 'how many days was I in, I lost track,'" she said. "He lost all sense of time."

Though the latest round of chemotherapy and the isolation has been difficult, Paul Goodman said he hasn't given up on making his next film.

"I really was hoping to make this second feature not through another bout of cancer," Goodman said. "First one was hard enough, but I feel like if I can make one movie through cancer, why can't I make a second movie?" Goodman said he hopes to make his next film this year.

He hopes his next film will focus on the wartime incarceration of Japanese Americans, and invited any interested would-be *Nikkei* talent to contact him.

"If there's anyone out there in the Asian American community that wants to get involved in making feature films or has experience, any age ... we'd love to get in touch, you can send me a message on Instagram (at @notsogoodman). *Jiichans* (Grandpas) and *baachans* (grandmas let's see what you got."

To register to the *Be The Match* register, visit <https://aadp.org/homekit> or text "Match4Paul" to 61474 to request a home kit from AADP. For more information on upcoming drives, visit <https://ganbattepaul.com>.

AADP will host a drive-thru donor registry event for Paul Goodman Saturday, Feb. 6 at the Palo Alto Buddhist Temple, located at 2751 Louis Road in Palo Alto, Calif. from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

## Biden memo condemns and combats racism against AAPIs

President Joe Biden addressed a memorandum to the heads of executive departments and agencies Jan. 26 with "Condemning and Combating Racism, Xenophobia, and Intolerance Against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the United States" in the subject line.

It acknowledged that "inflammatory and xenophobic rhetoric has put Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) persons, families, communities, and businesses at risk" throughout the coronavirus pandemic.

The memorandum also stated that "the federal government must recognize that it has played a role in furthering these xenophobic sentiments through the actions of political leaders, including references to the COVID-19 pandemic by the geographic location of its origin. Such statements have stoked unfounded fears and perpetuated stigma about Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and have contributed to increasing rates of bullying, harassment, and hate crimes against AAPI persons. These actions defied the best practices and guidelines of public health officials and have caused significant harm to AAPI families and communities that must be addressed."

The memo asserted that "the federal government has a responsibility to prevent racism, xenophobia, and intolerance against everyone in America, including Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders." It also stated that the Biden administration "condemns and denounces acts of racism, xenophobia, and intolerance against AAPI communities."

Furthermore, it said the "Secretary of Health and Human Services shall, in coordination with the COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force, consider issuing guidance describing best practices for advancing cultural competency, language access, and sensitivity towards Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the context of the federal government's COVID-19 response."

The memo added that "the Attorney General shall explore opportunities to support, consistent with applicable law, the efforts of state and local agencies, as well as AAPI communities and community-based organizations, to prevent discrimination, bullying, harassment, and hate crimes against AAPI individuals, and to expand collection of data and public reporting regarding hate incidents against such individuals."



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## Anti-racism protesters clash with police at Chinese consulate

Bay City News Service

More than three dozen protesters clashed with San Francisco police officers the afternoon of Jan. 23 outside the Chinese Consulate.

The protesters, who identified themselves as anti-racism

and anti-fascism, went to the consulate, located on Laguna Street in the city's Fillmore District, because they thought a far right group, the Proud Boys, was planning to be there.

It was unknown if any of the protesters were arrested.



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