

Flight for Life

- by Ken Anderson, webmaster ... February 17, 2011

In February 2009, Lindsey Van became the first-ever Women's World Champion in the sport of ski jumping. She'll be defending that title in February 2011 at the famed Holmenkollen in Oslo NOR. But she'll have something else on her mind ... something that'll happen a few weeks later.

Several years ago, in her home town of Park City, Lindsey met a young athlete with an ambitious goal ... to be the first from his country to make the Olympics as a winter athlete. Seun Adebisi is from Nigeria, and he'd narrowly missed making his country's swim team. With the same kind of determination that is also characteristic of Lindsey, he had found his way to Park City and decided to learn and train in the sport of skeleton. It's similar to luge, same track, only the athletes lie face-down and slide head-first.

Seun and Lindsey met, became friends, and eventually roommates. Then Seun ran head-first into an obstacle bigger than learning a new sport. He was diagnosed with leukemia. When it became apparent that a bone marrow transplant was needed, Lindsey didn't hesitate to register as a donor. It turned out she wasn't a match for Seun, but she wanted to remain in the registry in case she might be a match for someone else some day.

Seun did receive a transplant, is in remission, and he's now employed in the financial industry in New York, and he continues his skeleton training at Lake Placid. He's a remarkable young man with a promising future ... watch for him in Sochi in 2014. Read more about Seun and his journey ... the challenges he's put behind him, and those that lie ahead ... [Seun's blog](#) ... [facebook](#)

Lindsey was recently notified that "some day" has arrived. She is a match for a patient in San Francisco, and after many tests and preparatory procedures, she'll be flying there March 14-15 for the donation procedure. It will truly be a "flight for life."

When I asked Lindsey if it was OK to publish this article in an effort to get more people to think about becoming a registered donor candidate, she didn't hesitate at all. She's not looking for kudos ... she's lending her name and her story to encourage others to register at www.marlow.org. You can follow her story on her own blog at www.lindseyvan.com.

I had read about Seun's condition back then, and knew of Lindsey's registration as a donor, because she made a public appeal at that time. But like so many things in life, I forgot about it because it didn't affect me. I had so many things to do ... things that seemed important.

Then in 2010 our family got a double-whammy from this awful disease, and I had to face the fact that this doesn't just happen to others. And when it happens, your loved one could be waiting for help ,, that just might come from some stranger who took the simple step of registering. Or it might not come, because the right person didn't register.

Our grandddaughter, age 5 1/2 at the time, was diagnosed in April 2010 with a particularly nasty form of cancer, rhabdomyosarcoma. She has responded wonderfully to chemo, surgery, and radiation, and has just a month of chemo remaining. We're optimistic for her chances to beat this. She didn't need bone marrow, but has needed transfusions. I'm embarrassed to say that or the first time in my life, I finally donated blood. Being smacked in the face can put a quick end to one's complacency and procrastination. But why not act in advance? Pay it forward!

In June 2010, my sister was diagnosed with leukemia. A transplant might have been an option, but time ran out. I was tested, and was not a match. I asked about the registry, but I'm over the age limit. I've always had my driver's license marked for organ donation, but just put blood donation out of mind. Marrow, too. It wasn't ignorance, but laziness. I'm sorry I didn't act sooner, while I could have helped someone ... but we can do today and tomorrow what we didn't do yesterday.

Please consider joining Lindsey in this "Flight for Life." www.marlow.org