

EARL YOUNG'S TEAM

Defeating Blood Cancer Through Donor Awareness

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Earl Young's Team Launches Legacy Leadership Program At Freed-Hardeman University, Made Possible By Generous Gift From Pat Schenkel

Pilot program at Henderson, Tennessee campus marks a milestone in building sustainable, student-led blood stem cell donor registration movement on college campuses

DALLAS, Texas (August 25, 2026) — Earl Young's Team, a Dallas-based nonprofit dedicated to defeating blood cancer through blood stem cell donor registration and awareness, today announced the launch of its inaugural Legacy Leadership Program at Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tennessee. The program, launching for the 2026–2027 academic year, is made possible through an \$80,000 gift from Pat Schenkel.

The Legacy Leadership Program was created to address one of the most persistent challenges in campus-based donor registration: sustaining momentum after student leaders graduate. Designed to embed long-term donor registration leadership directly into university culture, the program equips students with the training, tools, and community to build lasting blood stem cell donor awareness that outlives any single graduating class.

Freed-Hardeman University is the first of five pilot campuses selected for the program's inaugural year. Earl Young's Team campus outreach efforts focus on young people ages 18 to 30, as research shows that stem cells from younger donors yield the best patient outcomes. Since 2015, Earl Young's Team has registered more than 40,000 potential donors — resulting in more than 200 second chances at life.

"Every student who joins the registry could be someone's only hope for survival," said Earl Young, Founding Director of Earl Young's Team and 1960 Olympic Gold Medalist. "This program is about more than one drive or one semester, it's about building a culture of generosity that keeps growing long after students walk across that stage. I'm deeply grateful to Pat Schenkel for making this possible and to Freed-Hardeman for opening its doors to this life-saving work."

Chris White, Chair of the Department of Nursing at Freed-Hardeman University says, "Sometimes sacrifice simply means making ourselves available [to swab]. That's selfless giving. That's loving our neighbor. Give someone hope!"

Pat Schenkel's \$80,000 gift provides the founding investment for the Legacy Leadership Program pilot, supporting student leader training, campus drive infrastructure, outreach materials, and program coordination across five universities during the 2026–2027 academic year. Additional pilot campuses will be announced in the coming months..

About Earl Young's Team

Earl Young's Team is a Dallas-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit founded by Olympic Gold Medalist and AML survivor Earl Young. Inspired by his own life-saving transplant in 2012, Earl has dedicated his second chance to building and diversifying the blood stem cell donor pool. Through campus drives, community events, and swab drives sharing patient stories, Earl Young's Team has registered more than 40,000 potential donors since 2015. To learn more or to register as a potential donor, visit earlyyoungsteam.org.

About Freed-Hardeman University

Freed-Hardeman University is a private university affiliated with the Churches of Christ, located in Henderson, Tennessee. Offering more than 58 majors and hands-on learning built on faith-based values, FHU is committed to providing a quality Christian education that empowers students to develop their God-given talents for His glory. Founded in 1869, the university enrolls approximately 1,871 undergraduates and maintains a student-faculty ratio of 13:1. FHU offers degrees through five colleges — Arts and Sciences, Biblical Studies, Business, Education and Behavioral Sciences, and the Honors College — and is led by President David Shannon. For more information, visit fhu.edu.

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