It’s World Sickle Cell Day

June 15, 2015 By Cyntra Scott

In 2008, the United Nations began recognizing World Sickle Cell Day (WSCD) on June 19th. This special day is marked each year by many activities and lectures across the United States and worldwide that commemorate this event.

In general, the main objectives of WSCD are as follow:
1. To recognize that sickle cell disease (SCD) is a public health problem in many parts of the world
2. To emphasize the need to raise worldwide awareness of SCD
3. To encourage the efforts of healthcare systems and providers to improve the management and treatment of SCD
4. To advocate for new legislation to help fund and facilitate SCD research, increased awareness, treatment programs, clinics and support for people with SCD

These goals raise sickle cell awareness on an international scale. But there are also simple facts many might not know about sickle cell disease. I’ve listed them below:
1. SCD is the most common genetic disease in the world.
2. SCD is not contagious.
3. SCD affects people of all races, but the illness is present in higher percentages in those of African, Middle Eastern and Southern European descent.
4. SCD is a lifelong chronic disease that damages organs and bones.
5. SCD can cause pain crisis in any area of the body where blood flows.

Like me, Nita Thompson, chair of the African American Blood Drive and Bone Marrow Registry for Sickle Cell Disease Awareness in California, is a passionate advocate for educating others about sickle cell. “I think World Sickle Cell Day is important, because it seems that the world has forgotten about this subject,” she says.

Also like me, Thompson noticed the need for sickle cell advocacy and decided to help spread SCD awareness. Thompson’s beliefs reflect my own. “We need to lead by example if we want change to occur,” she stresses.

Click here to visit her organization’s website.

And for those who are motivated, there are many ways to acknowledge World Sickle Cell Day. You can donate blood, give money to a sickle cell disease organization, search via Google to find sickle cell awareness events in your area, join a bone marrow registry to donate bone marrow, or simple

share sickle cell awareness with family and friends.

Be Well! Be Wonderful!

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